

Sacerdotal Powers:

OR THE
NECESSITY

OF
CONFESSION, PENANCE,
AND
ABSOLUTION.

Together with the Nullity of
Unauthoriz'd Lay Baptism
ASSERTED.

In an **ESSAY.**

Occasion'd by the Publication of Two
SERMONS Preach'd at SALISBURY the
5th and 7th of NOVEMBER. 1710.

By the *AUTHOR* of
LAY BAPTISM INVALID.

*Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see and ask
for the Old Paths, where is the Good way, and walk there-
in, and ye shall find rest for your Souls: but they said, we
will not walk therein, Jer. vi. 16.*

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ERRATA.

PAge viii. line 7. instead of *out* read *our*. p. 54.
l. 27. instead of *consequently*, and *r.* and *con-*
sequently. p. 59. l. 11. dele *and*.

THE

THE PREFACE.

Containing some

Reflections on the First Sermon, &c.

THE Writer of the two Sermons, said to have been Preach'd at Salisbury, on the 5th and 7th of November last, by the L — B — of S —, lays down this as a Maxim, p. 22. That “*Whatever Moderation or Charity we may owe to Mens Persons, we owe none at all to their Errors, and to that Frame which is built on, and supported by them*: And therefore I have no need to make any other Apology to this Author for my following Remarks, than what his own Maxim does abundantly furnish me withal.

In reading these two Sermons, one is apt to suspect the Truth of their Title Page; and question how 'tis possible that the B —
A of

of S—— should be the Author of them ?
 For who, that knows his L——p's Christian Compassion, and Disposition to sympathize with those who mourn for the Slain of our Countrymen, our Friends and Relations, —— would take this to come from his L——p's Mouth, "*Even a Devouring War has made so inconsiderable a consumption of our People, that it is scarce to be Discern'd,* p. 5.

Who that has any Experience of his L——p's Moderation and Tenderneſs for Erroneous Conſciences, can believe that theſe following Words concerning the Popiſh Powder-Plot, were utter'd by his L——p, p. 8.
 "*If ſo Diabolical a Plot, brought ſo near having the moſt Dirmiſal Effect poſſible, had carried the Nation even to the Severities of a Total Extirpation, ſo high a Provocation muſt have Excused, if not quite Juſtify'd the Proceeding.* Theſe are the very Words of our Author, without the leaſt Variation ; and the plain Senſe and meaning of 'em is, That if the Engliſh Nation had, for the ſake of that Hellish Plot, utterly deſtroy'd and cut off every Papiſt, without diſtinction of Quality, Age, or Sex, ſo as to leave them neither Root nor Branch among us, which is a Total Extirpation : The high Provocation (which by the way, was given but

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but by a very few in comparison to the whole) must have excused, if not quite justified the Proceeding.

I'm sure his L——p knows, that Natural Religion teaches and Reveal'd Religion confirms this Doctrine, That the *Innocent* shall not be cut off, or rooted up for the Crimes and Wickednesses of the Guilty; 'tis a self-evident Truth, and needs no Demonstration: How then can it be affirmed, that the Hellishness of a few Fiery Zealots Plots and Designs, the High Provocation given by a few Harden'd Villains, must have been an *Excuse*, if not an *Entire Justification* for the Barbarity and Inhumanity of so Consummate a Revenge, as the Rooting up of Thousands, and ten Thousands of *Innocents*, who never had, and we may charitably believe never would have had, any the least share in the Guilt of those flagitious Sinners?

If any of those call'd *High-Flyers*, had run to this Excess against our *Fanaticks*, who once effected (what those Diabolical Plotters, God be praised, could not compass) the Total Overthrow of our Church and Government; if one of those call'd *High-Churchmen*, had but affirm'd, that the *Provocation* once given to this Nation by our *Anti-Episcopal Enthusiasts* (who once Murder'd,

in a most Barbarous, and till then, unheard of manner, *Our Royal Sovereign*, and Destroy'd our *most Excellent* Constitution both in Church and State, after they had most savagely Butcher'd Thousands, who oppos'd their Hellish Designs) *must have Excus'd, if not quite Justify'd, their Total Extirpation*; what a Cry (and that justly too) should we then have had against such a Spirit of Malice and Revenge; how loudly should we have been then told, that such an Assertion favour'd of nothing better than the *Devilish Spirit of Anti-Christ*, as being so Diametrically opposite to the Temper and Disposition of the Christian Religion! His L——p would doubtless have been one of the forwardest to enter his *Protest* against so *Uncharitable, so Inhumane* a Sentence; and certainly, if 'tis reasonable to believe, that such a *Total Extirpation* of *Fanatics*, for the sake of *multitudes* of their Fraternity, who were *actually* concern'd in, and at last *Executed* their Diabolical Plots and Contrivances, would be Deservedly branded by his L——p with such Black and Odious Marks and Characters; How much more should we believe that his L——p detests and abhors any plea of *Excuse* for such a *Total Extirpation* of Papists, for the sake of a few Miscreants;

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as is not only *Inconsistent* with his L——p's own declar'd and avowed Principle of *Moderation*, but also at least as Cruel and Barbarous, as Inhumane and Antichristian as the other *Total Extirpation* of *Fanaticks* would have been, in all *Respects* whatsoever? There's no reason to question his L——p's just abhorrence of this *Total Extirpation*, since 'tis such a monstrous Degree of Heat and Fury, that it infinitely exceeds and surpasses that *RAGE*, which our Writer would make us believe, some * "*shew now- * Sermon 2. p. 24.*
a-days for our Church.

'Tis very strange, that this Writer should first assert, that such a *Total Extirpation* must have been *Excus'd*, if not quite *Justify'd*, and then immediately to add, "*But our Religion teaches us milder things.* Either the *Total Extirpation* he speaks of *must not* have been *Excus'd*; or if it *must*, then our Religion does not teach us *milder things*: For, if our Religion teaches us milder things than such *Total Extirpations*; then it will follow, that such *Total Extirpations* are breaches of the Precepts of our Religion; and if so, then how can their Excusableness be consistent with that Holy and Pure Religion, which admits of *No Excuses* for wilful and deliberate Sins? Much

less does it allow of such Excuses for Sin, as are so *Cogent* and *Strong*, as to leave no room for a just Reply to them; it may be ask'd, Whether that Excuse which our Author here speaks of, is not of that sort? for he tells us, That *the Diabolical Plot, &c.* must have excus'd the *Total Extirpation*. Therefore, if it must have Excus'd, &c. there could have been nothing justly said to the contrary; for what must be Excus'd, has Reason for it's Excuse; and there's no contradicting of Reason. Some Papists, while they acknowledge the Religious obligation of Oaths and Covenants, do at the same time affirm, That *no Faith is to be kept with Hereticks*; and I would fain know, whether it is not as Corrupt a piece of Popery, to acknowledge, that our *Religion teaches us milder things* than *Total Extirpations*—and at the same time to affirm, that such an Extirpation must have been Excus'd, if not quite Justified?

In *Page 9.* our Author would make us believe, that his L——p teaches us what is the *Essence* of our Constitution of Government, in these Words, “ *The Essence of*
 “ *our Constitution lies in this, That the Le-*
 “ *gislation is in the King with the two Houses*
 “ *of Parliament, but the Execution of the*
 “ *Law*”

“ *Law is singly in the Crown.* I shall industriously avoid concerning myself with State Politicks, they being utterly forreign to my present Design; but this I must observe, that this pretended Description of the *Essence* of our Constitution is so indeterminate and Indefinite, that nothing of the true Nature thereof can be learn’d from it; since it neither determines what is the *Original Foundation* of the Legislature, whether the King, or the two Houses of Parliament; nor, if they be suppos’d by him to be *Co-ordinate*, how this *Equality* came first into Being. And as to the Execution of the Law, its being “*singly in the Crown*” does not give us any the least Idea, whether this *Prerogative* of the Crown, was ever receiv’d from any other Humane Authority *superior* to that of the Crown, or whether ’tis an *Independent Prerogative* of the Crown, founded upon no such Superior Authority whatsoever. So great a Latitude is there in this Account of what he calls the *Essence* of our Constitution, that one may reasonably ask this Question, whether it will not serve for any Turn, and suit to any Scheme of Politicks, which some may have occasion to apply it to?

In Page 10. Our Author lays this down for a Maxim, viz. "*In all Relations where the Foundation is taken away, the Relation and Obligation arising out of it, are Destroy'd.*" Then he would seem to apply the Maxim thus, "*The Relation of Children to a Parent, arises out of his conveying Being to them, but if he goes to destroy that Being, they are acquitted, when they Defend themselves.*" But what is this to his Maxim? Is the *Foundation* of their Relation to their Parent taken away? Is their *Relation* to him now Destroy'd? Are they no more his Children? And after this Defence (*which by the way, must not be a Defence contrary to Law*) are they for ever absolv'd from any further Duty to such Parent? This is what one would have thought he was going to determine, by laying down such a Maxim. But nothing like this has he Exemplified between Children and their Parents.—And indeed how is it possible that he should? For tho' the Relation of Children to a Parent arises out of his having been *once* the Instrumental Cause of their Production; yet this *Foundation* can never be taken away so long as the Children live: For let the Parent be never so Cruel and Barbarous in
his

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his attempts to take away their Life, yet still the *Foundation* remains untaken away, because, it cannot upon the account of his Cruelty, be truly said, that he *never was* the cause of bringing them into the World; 'tis certainly true that *he was*, and therefore they are as certainly his Children still; and consequently the *Foundation* not being *actually* taken away, the *Relation* must still remain good and firm. But further, the *Foundation* of the Duty of Children to their Parents, lies in this, That Parents are always from the Beginning, the Childrens *Natural Superiors*; That God, by the Law of *Natural and Revealed Religion*, does always *bind* Children to their *Filial Duty*, and all Nations, both Civil and Barbarous, have *Laws and Customs* that *oblige* them to it; and I will agree with him, if his Maxim can possibly be apply'd here, that when all these *Foundations* shall be utterly remov'd, then *all the Obligations* of Children to their Parents, will consequently be destroy'd: When it shall be true, that Parents are not always from the beginning, the *Natural Superiors* of their Children, when it shall be certain, that God does require no Duty from Children to their Parents; then, and not till then, can the *Obligation be Destroy'd*; because
then,

then, and not till then, will, or can, the *Foundation of the Obligation* be taken away. But this will never come to pass, as long as there shall be Parents and Children in the World; and therefore, it will never come to pass, that Children can be acquitted from that Duty which they owe to their Parents.

I might here Reflect on those Assertions in *Pag. 10, 11.* where we are told, That "*The Rights of our Princes arise out of our Legislature, and that the Law creates the Prerogative*" as if the Crown was not always possess'd of some *Prerogatives*, for which it was never beholden to any *Human Law* whatsoever.

But this, and many other Passages in almost every Page of the First Sermon, which deserve to be Reflected on, I leave to Persons of more time and Leisure; they being things forreign to my main Design, which 'tis now high time for me to prosecute.



Sacerdotal

Sacerdotal Powers:

OR, THE

Necessity of Confession, &c.

CHAP. I.

*Remarks on our Author's View of what he
calls our Holy Religion.*

§. 1. **I**N the second Sermon on the 7th
of November, p. 20, &c. our Au-
thor gives us a short View of
what he calls *Our Holy Religion*,
in Opposition to the Corruptions of Pope-
ry. And it is very observable, that in all
that View, he does not once shew us the
Divine Right of Bishops, and their Indepen-
dency on the See of *Rome*, in opposition to
the Pope's pretended Sepremacy over all
Bishops: This is one Part (and a very ne-
cessary

cessary one too) of our most Holy Religion, and very Destructive of Popery, and yet he leaves it out of his Plan of *our* Religion: Whether he omits it, because it is directly opposite to the Pretences and Usurpations of the several Teachers among our Sectaries, I shall not determine; but this I am sure of, that if he had incerted it, his *Short View* would have been more proper for his L—p to be call'd the Author of it,

§. 2. The next Observation I shall make on his *Short View*, is, that he Represents it as a part of our Religion, that we “*Reject*” “*all the Contrivances of Pardons*.” Now, what he means by “*all the Contrivances of*” “*Pardons*” every Body is not agreed; some will have it to signify, only *all* the Popish Corruptions of that Power, which Christ gave to the Spiritual Governors of his Church, to Pardon and Absolve Penitent Sinners; and certainly, if he means only the Popish Corruptions of the Power to Pardon; then, to be sure *we do reject them*. But others will have it, that our Author's Words should have been definite and particular, so as to have distinguish'd the *Corruptions*, from the *Authority* and *Power* of Pardoning and Absolving; that

so we might have discover'd, whether he
 rejected the *Corruptions only*, and retain'd
 and asserted the *Power of Pardoning Peni-*
tents, or no; this they say he has not
 done; and therefore 'tis question'd, whe-
 ther he does not esteem *all Sacerdotal Par-*
dons to be but a *Contrivance of Popery*, and
 give them the Name of *Contrivances*, and
 for that Reason, because they are *Popish*
Contrivances, say that *we reject* them? But
 let the Design of this Expression be what
 it will, to say that we reject *all Contrivances*
of Pardons, without making any Distincti-
 on, or Exception whatsoever, is without
 Excuse; for, Did not *Christ* give to his
 Apostles and their Successors the Power of
 Pardoning, when he said to them, *Whose*
soever Sins ye remit, they are remitted; and
 is not this *One Contrivance of Pardon*, viz.
Our Lord's own Contrivance? Has not the
 Church in all Ages carried on this *Contri-*
vance, by constantly Exercising this Pow-
 er? And is it not matter of Fact, that
 our Church, whose Religion this Writer
 would seem to give us a View of, does
 continue to support and uphold this *Con-*
trivance of Pardons? When his L——p
 was Ordain'd and receiv'd into the Or-
 der of *Priesthood*, did not the Bishop who
 Ordain'd him (as our Office of ordering
 Priests

Priests directs) convey to him this Power, when he authoritatively told him, *Whose Sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven?* And does not his L——p now he is a B——p, do the same to all Priests whom he Ordains? and thereby propagate and hand down to Posterity this *Contrivance of Pardons*? Nay further, to shew that all this is not bare Form and Ceremony, is it not notorious (and who but the wilfully Blind can be ignorant of it!) That this *Contrivance of Pardoning Sinners* is *actually put in Execution* by the Priests of our Church? 1. In the Absolution that immediately follows the daily Confession of Sins in our Morning and Evening Service. 2ly. In the Absolution that immediately follows the Confession in the Communion Service; and 3dly. And *very expressly and particularly*, with abundance of Authority; in the Visitation of the Sick, in these very Words;

“ Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left
 “ Power to his Church to Absolve all Sin-
 “ ners who truly Repent and Believe in
 “ him, of his great Mercy forgive thee
 “ thine Offences: And By His Authority
 “ committed to me, I ABSOLVE
 “ thee from ALL THY SINS, in
 “ the Name of Father, and of the Son,
 “ and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Is

Is not all this true? And is it not carrying on our Lord's Blessed *Contrivance of Pardons*? How then can our Author tell the World that *we reject all Contrivances of Pardons*? And assert this in the Name of a B---p of our Church.

§ 3. But to proceed—— In p. 21. it is said very truly, that “*We give our assent to Divine Truths, because we are convinc’d that they came from God: But then he adds, without receiving Any thing implicitly because a Priest, tells us of a Tradition for it.*” Here it may be question’d, whether our *Priest-Haters*, especially some of the Ignorant sort, will not pass over the Word [Implicitly] and roundly affirm hence, that the *Traditions* of the *Priests* are of no value, and that their Testimony concerning Divine Truths, is utterly useless to the Christian Church? We have People among us who despise all Ecclesiastical *Tradition*, because they reckon it *Popery*; And tho’ our Author has no design to encourage them in this Error yet still they are very apt to catch at every thing, that a Man of any Reputation says against Tradition, tho’ guarded with the greatest Care and Circumspection.—— And therefore, I must put such in mind,
that

that it is the *Priests Tradition* which hands down to us inviolably, the *Canon* of Holy Scripture. That it is upon the *Priest's* Testimony, that we are convinc'd, that the Sacred Books were written by those *very Authors* whose Names they bear. That *PRIESTS* are the only sufficient, and Credible Witnesses of this *Tradition*, because, the Books were Originally committed to, and have ever since been, in their peculiar Custody, and therefore we must have some Faith in their Conveyance of this Tradition to us; and without this Faith, we can never attain to a right belief of what is the Canon, and who were the Authors of the Holy Scriptures; and consequently, not to a Rational assent, to all the Divine Truths contain'd in those Sacred Writings. Nay further, those who are not skill'd in the Original Languages of those Divine Writings, and how great is their Number! must be beholden to the *Priests*; nay, they must, as we say, pin their Faith upon *Priests* Sleeves, before they can so much as have any notice of, much more assent to the Sacred Truths contain'd in them; for 'tis from the *PRIESTS* that we have our Translations of those Sacred Repositories of Divine Truth; and what is yet more, even the right Sense and true meaning

meaning of the *Controverted* Texts of the Holy Scripture, is only to be obtain'd by the *Priests Tradition* of what was always receiv'd by them, for the True and Genuine Interpretation of those Disputed Texts. For Example, 'Tis by their *Tradition* that we are determin'd, that all those Texts which are *Controverted* between us and the Antipædo-Baptists, do authorize and require Infant Baptism; that those Texts which are Disputed between us and all Sectaries concerning Church Government, do unavoidably establish the *Divine Right of Episcopacy*; and lastly to name no more, 'tis by this *Tradition* of the *Priests* that we are brought to receive the first Day of the Week instead of the seventh, for our Christian Sabbath.—These are Divine Truths which we receive, because the *Priests* tell us (and we cannot justly deny it) that they have *Traditions* for them; and I Challenge any one, to shew us a better and safer Rule for our Conviction, in things of so necessary and Now, (without this Rule) of so Disputable a Nature. Daily Experience teaches us, that if we would not be wholly Sceptical in Religious Matters; if we would not set up for despisers and scorers of all Reveal'd Religion, we must

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first or last receive many things because the Priests tell us of Traditions for them.

§. 4. Next, in the same Page, we are told thus ; “ We repent of our Sins by confessing them to God, by mourning for them, and forsaking them. But do not think that God has commanded us to tell them to a Priest, to submit to his Arbitrary Penance, and to rely on a hasty Absolution.

Here we see it is represented as a part of our Religion, not to confess our Sins to a Priest ; and certainly, if we may reject all Contrivances of Pardons (as we have been told we do) there’s no need for such a Confession : And then Penance for Sin enjoyn’d by a Priest, whether Arbitrary or not, will be utterly unreasonable to be submitted to ; for, where there is no Power to Absolve, there can be no Duty or Obligation to Confess ; and consequently no Authority to impose Penance, and therefore no Duty to submit to it when impos’d. The Enemies of the Christian Priesthood will gladly hear, that God has not commanded us to tell our Sins to a Priest, grant ’em but this, and they will draw the Inference, That Priests have no Power to Absolve Sinners ; and consequently that their Absolution whether Hasty or more Deliberate,

rate is not to be rely'd on. If this be receiv'd as true, then it may be ask'd, whether many Well-meaning tho' Ignorant People, will not pronounce all *Priestly Absolution*, all *Confession of Sins to a Priest*, and all submission to *Ecclesiastical Penance* for the mortification of Sin, to be but meer Impositions and Inventions of corrupt Popery, and nothing else but Priestcraft and Spiritual Tyranny? We find by woful Experience, that Men are too much addicted to interpret every thing to the abatement of the Power and Authority of the Christian Priesthood, and to the Banishment of all Ecclesiastical Discipline out of the World. The Disease is now become Epidemical and Infectious; especially among us of the Laity: And therefore I think it highly necessary that some Remedy should be apply'd, and in order thereto shall endeavour to prove,

First, That the Great Author of our most Holy Religion, *Christ Jesus*, has given the Power of Pardoning and Absolving Sinners, to the Bishops and Priests of his Church, to the End of the World.

Secondly, That his giving this Power to the Priests, lays an Obligation upon Men under several Circumstances, to tell or confess their Sins to them, that they may

receive the Benefit of their special and particular Absolution. And,

Thirdly, That Men are bound to submit to their Lawful and Prudent Injunctions, which they shall lay on them by way of Penance, for the mortification of their Sins.

CHAP. II.

C H A P. II.

Of Sacerdotal Absolution.

§. 1. **A**ND First, That Christ has given this Pardoning and Absolving Power to the Bishops and Priests of his Church, is abundantly evident, 1st. From his Promise to his Apostles before his Crucifixion, "*Whatsoever ye shall Loose on Earth shall be Loosed in Heaven*, St. Matt. xviii. 18. And 2^{ly}. From his conferring this Power on them after his Resurrection, when he Appear'd to them and first made them ~~his~~ *his own Representatives*, saying, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*, St. John xx. 21. When he had hereby authorised them to send others vested with their Apostolic Authority, as his Father had sent him to confer his Apostolic Authority upon them, "Then He Breathed "*on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, Whosoever Sins ye Remit, they are Remitted unto them, and whosoever Sins ye Retain, they are Retained*, v. 22, 23. In these Words 'tis plain, that the Authority of Remitting Sins which Christ gave his

Apostles, is more than *meerly Declarative*, *Whose-soever Sins We Remitt.* This is the Apostle's *Act of Forgiving* by Virtue of Christ's Authority, whose *Delegates* they are. And this *Act* of theirs is *Effectual*, and *really* conveys the Pardon pronounc'd, and insures to the *Penitent* the certainty thereof, as much, as if Christ himself had pronounc'd it; for our Lord says positively *They are Remitted*, they are Pardon'd and done away. And the same he says concerning the Apostle's Power, to retain Sins, that when they do retain them, *They are Retain'd*, they actually remain bound upon the *Impenitent Sinner*. — These are *Acts* which have a constant and never-failing *energy* upon their *proper Subjects*, and do really effect what they express; and this *Efficacy* is as *sure* as the *Divine Veracity*, because Christ, *who is God*, is the giver of this Authority, he *concurs* with his *Proxies* due Execution of it; and expressly asserts the immediate and present Effect thereof, *They are Remitted; They are Retained.*

This Power and Authority, Greater than that of the Angelick Spirits, the *Sovereign King and Supreme Head* of his Church, gave expressly to his Apostles, *his Vicegerents*; and to the end that this unspeakably great
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Authority might not terminate and expire with their Persons, you see that *He sent them even as his Father sent him*: For, as his Father had sent him with sufficient Power to confer *His Authority* on others, *EVEN SO* our Lord sent *HIS Apostles* with sufficient Power to confer their Authority, on others; otherwise he did not send them *even as his Father sent him*. —

But they had the Authority of *Remitting and Retaining Sins*; therefore they were sent with sufficient Power to confer on others their Authority of *Remitting and Retaining Sins*: Nay, so Extensive and Unbounded is the duration of this Authority to forgive Sins, that it must continue in the Priesthood *to the end of the World*; we have our Great God and Saviour's own Word for it; for he positively promis'd *These his Apostles, Lo I am with you* *always even unto the end of the World*, St. Matt. xxviii.

20. — *i. e.* I am with you *my Apostles*, whom I have vested with a Power of Forgiving Sins, and of *sending others* vested by you with the *same Power*; I say I am with you as long as you shall Live, and then successively so with all other *such Apostles*, and others whom you and they shall send with this Power of Absolving, and I will concur with you and them in the execution

on of this and all other ordinary Spiritual Powers I have given you, (which is the only way of my being with you as Apostles) *always, even unto the end of the World*: For, if this Power of Forgiving Sins, which was one part of the *Ordinary* Power of the Apostles, were not to be continued throughout all Ages in their Successors, and those whom they should vest with this Authority, then it would follow, that the *Ordinary* Apostolick Power must cease before the end of the World; and consequently, that Christ would not be true to his Promise of continuing to be with *His Apostles to the end of the World*: For 'tis impossible to have Apostles without Apostolick Powers; and therefore if the Apostolick Power and Authority must cease, *Apostles themselves must cease also*, and then Christ is not with his Apostles always, *even to the end of the World*, tho he gave his sacred Word for it, that he would be *always* with them. This is such a *Blasphemous Affront* upon our Saviour's Faithfulness, and such a *Contradiction* to his infallible Promise, that it ought to be abhorr'd and detested by all Men. And therefore, as long as the World shall last Christ will be present with *Apostles*; as long as he is present with *Apostles*, there must be *Ordinary Apostolic Powers*, and as long

long as there shall be Ordinary Apostolic Powers, there must be the Power of *Remitting* and Retaining Men's Sins, which is one of those *Ordinary Powers*: That is, this Power must be in the Apostles, and their Successors the Bishops, and such as are, and shall be Ordain'd by them for this purpose, to the end of the World; *i. e.* the Priests of the Christian Church, have a Power of Pardoning and Absolving Sinners in Christ's stead to the end of the World.

§. 2. *Obj. 1.* The avow'd Enemies of this Great Prerogative of the Christian Priesthood, will doubtless Object, That the Authority of Pardoning and Absolving Sinners, given by Christ to his Apostles, was an Extraordinary Gift for the Exigencies of the Infant State of the Church, as the Power of working Miracles was; that it was no Ordinary part of the Apostolic Power, any more than that of working Miracles, and that consequently, tho' 'tis true, That the Apostles and their Successors, do convey to others the Ordinary Powers Apostolical, yet 'tis as true, that they do not convey thro' all Ages, the Extraordinary Powers Apostolical, because we see they have not convey'd the Power of

of working Miracles, which is ceas'd ; and therefore they cannot convey to others the Power of Absolving Sinners, because this Power was also an Extraordinary Apostolic Power.

Ans. To which I Answer ; Not to enumerate the particular *Extraordinary Powers* wherewith the first Apostles were endow'd by the plentiful Effusion of the Holy Ghost. — This is certain, that those Powers which Christ gave them before his Ascension, and which would be *always necessary* to be exercis'd for the supply of the continual *Ordinary Spiritual* Exigencies and Necessities of the Church, during its Militant State ; I say, 'tis certain, that those Powers are the *Ordinary Apostolic Powers*, which were to be convey'd by the Apostles and their Successors the Bishops, wholly and entirely ; *i. e.* all of them to the Bishops, and partially, *i. e.* some of them to other inferior Officers, as Priests and Deacons, for the continual supply of those Ordinary Spiritual Wants of the Church, to the *end of the World*. — Now, that the *Power of Remitting Sins*, is one of those Ordinary Apostolic Powers is plain ; because the Members of the Church in all Ages, stand as much in need of this Remission of Sins as ever they did, even in the Days of the

the Apostles themselves; for there is no Reason can be given for the necessity of such a Remission in the first planting of the Church, which will not equally hold good for the Necessity of the like Remission in all the After-Ages of the Church: During our Warfare with the Invisible Powers of Darkeness, there will be Sinners in the Church; and as long as there shall be Sinners, there will be a Necessity for the Restoration of Penitents by Priestly Absolution, if ever there was any Necessity at all for such a Restoration of them; and we see that Christ himself once thought there was such a Necessity, by his giving such a Power to his Apostles. If it be said, that God has promis'd *Pardon to the Penitent*, and therefore they may rest assured that God will Pardon them without the Priest's Absolution. The Answer is, that his Promise was as sure in the Apostle's Days as 'tis now, and yet our Lord would notwithstanding vest them with his Power of Absolution; and Men were bound, in many Cases, to sue to them for it, otherwise our Lord would not have given them such Power. This Objection was as strong against the Primitive Christians applying to the Priests for Pardon, and against the Priests Remitting their Sins then, as it is now:

now : But the Truth is, it was not in those Days a just Objection at all, as is evident by our Lord's granting such Power to Men ; and therefore 'tis no just Objection now, since Mens Necessities are still the the same. God may doubtless Pardon such Penitents as cannot obtain, and yet do not *neglect* or *contemn* the Priestly Absolution ; But then it ought to be remember'd, that he has never granted any Pardon, but by the Intercession of the Great Mediator Christ Jesus ; that under the Patriarchal and *Mosaic* Dispensations, his Pardons were convey'd by the Instituted Means of Priests, and Sacrifices, and Burnt-Offerings, made by them, as Representatives of that Great Mediator.—And that under the Christian Dispensation, the same Mediator has appointed his own Representatives, to convey in his stead, God's Pardon to Penitents ; and therefore the *Despisers* of this Power have no Claim to his Promise, since they cannot fairly be call'd true Penitents, who despise and reject any one Institution of God. And that this of the Priestly Absolution is such an Institute as is binding and obliging in all Ages, is plain from what has been said above ; *viz.* That 'twas an *Ordinary* part of the Apostolic Power, because equally as necessary to

to be exercis'd now for our Spiritual Benefit as it was for theirs in the first Ages of Christianity. And this the Apostles and their Successors, in all Ages and Places, have confirm'd to be true, by constantly conferring this Power on others, and their Execution thereof to this Day, without interruption; and our Church in strict Conformity to them, does both Confer and Execute this Great Power, as I have before observ'd.

S. 3. Obj. 2. It is Objected by others against the Power of the Priests Absolution---That the Apostles were endow'd with a Miraculous Gift of discerning Spirits, and so knew infallibly the Sincerity and Truth of Mens Repentance, and therefore had Authority to Absolve Penitents from their Sins, which their Successors now have not, because they are destitute of this Miraculous Power of discerning the Thoughts of Mens Hearts.

Ans. To which 'tis Answer'd, That it cannot be prov'd, that the Gift of Discerning Spirits was given to the Apostles, more to enable them to Absolve Penitents, than to perform any other parts of their Sacred Office, for the benefit of Repenting Sinners. But, not to enquire here for what purposes

purposes this Gift was bestow'd on *Some*,
 we find, that this Miraculous Power, even
 in the Apostles Days, was not always gi-
 ven to *every Minister* of Christ, who yet
 had sufficient Power and Authority to con-
 vey such Spiritual Benefits to Men, as were
 due to them, only upon Condition of their
Sincere and Hearty Repentance. Thus we
 find *Philip* the Deacon, had Authority to
 Baptize for the forgiveness of Sins, tho' he
 does not appear to have been endow'd with
 the Miraculous Power of Discerning Spi-
 rits; at least 'tis plain, that he was not as-
 sisted by this Power, when he Baptis'd
Simon Magus, *Acts* viii. 13: without being
Infallibly assur'd of the Truth of his Repen-
 tance; for in Fact, he was *no True Peni-*
tent, but a Cheat and an Impostor, as his
 after History shews. This Baptism would
 have been effectual for the forgiveness of
 his Sins, and his Spiritual Sanctification, if
 he had been truly Penitent, tho' *Philip* did
 not *Infallibly* know that he was so. This
 want of Discerning, did not destroy *Philip's*
 Authority to convey Forgiveness of Sins
 by Baptism, 'twas the Baptized's fault, if
 he by his Insincerity, and Hypocrisie, miss'd
 of those great Benefits. So the Priests of
 the Church of *Corinth*, were destitute of this
 Miraculous Power, when they admitted to
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the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, such unworthy Communicants, as were not true Penitents, for they eat and drank Damnation to themselves, not discerning the Lord's Body, 1 Cor. xi. 29, 30. But still their Authority to administer that Sacrament, was effectual to the Worthy Communicants; and when Men received no Benefit by it, 'twas owing *only* to their own Sins, and not to any want of the *Commission'd* Administrator's Authority.

In both these Cases *Repentance* is necessary, and *Remission of Sins* is given in Baptism and the Lord's Supper, only upon *that Condition*; and tho' the Minister hath not an *Infallible* Knowledge, yet he may have a *Moral Certainty* of the *Repentance*, and other Spiritual Qualifications of those Persons, to whom he administers those two Sacraments; provided he, and they, are so just as to do those several Duties, which the right Administration and reception of those Sacraments necessarily call for; and therefore his Authority given him to administer them, remains good and valid.

Thus we see, that this Objection is of no force against *Sacerdotal* Remission of Sins, by means of the two Sacraments, —and, it is of as little Consequence against the Priests Authority to *Pronounce*, and thereby
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to convey to sincere Penitents the *Absolution* and *Remission of their Sins*. For, even the Great Apostle of the Gentiles, *St. Paul himself*, does not appear to have exercis'd this Authority, as endow'd with the Miraculous Gift of Discerning Spirits; no, we rather find him absolving the Penitent *Corinthian*, without this *Infallible Knowledge* of his Repentance, upon *Moral Signs* and *Tokens* thereof, given him by Letters or Messages, from the Church of *Corinth*; and upon *Confidence* of the Integrity and Honesty of the Relators of it: For being at *Philippi*, a City of *Macedonia*, he heard a common Report, that the Christians of *Corinth* were guilty of the Sin of Fornication, *1 Cor. v. 1.* and particularly, that one of them incestuously took his Father's Wife; — upon which he Wrote to them, and commanded them to *Excommunicate* this Incestuous Person, *Ver. 3, 4, 5, and 13.* which they accordingly did. — In his Second Epistle, he tells them the Reason of his writing and commanding them so to Censure that notorious Sinner, That he “might know the proof of them, whether they were obedient in all things, *2 Cor. ii. 9.*” He did not by Virtue of the Miraculous Gift of Discerning Spirits, know their Obedience at that Distance; he wanted a Proof thereof; which they

they accordingly gave him, by the infliction of that Punishment on the Offender, which he had Commanded; and which *Titus* upon his return from *Corinth*, acquainted *St. Paul* with, as is plain from 2 *Cor.* vii. 6, 12. &c. — The Apostle being thus inform'd of the Obedience of the *Corinthians*, and also of the Sorrow and Repentance of the Incestuous Person writes to them to Forgive him, 2 *Cor.* ii. 6, 7, 8. and to encourage them thereto, pronounces his Absolution himself, tho' at that Distance from them, upon the Credit which he gave to *Titus's* Relation of that Affair; for says he, " *To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also, &c. in the Person of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor.* " ii. 10." or by the Authority which I have receiv'd from *Jesus Christ*. — And one Reason why he would have the Incestuous Person Absolv'd, was (as in *ver. 7.*) " *Lest perhaps such a one should be swallow'd up with overmuch Sorrow;*" this putting it upon a [perhaps] does no ways comport with any *Infallible Knowledge* that the Apostle could have of the *Penitent's Sorrow*; for if he had, by a *miraculous Gift of Discerning*, known the true Nature, and certain Effects thereof, he would never have used so *doubtful* an Argument, but rather have affirm'd positively,

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without any perhaps, that the Incestuous Person would certainly *be swallow'd up with overmuch Sorrow* : And since he was not thus *positive*, it is plain, that he had only a *Moral Assurance* of the Man's Sorrow and Repentance, given him by the Report of others, whom he esteem'd worthy of Credit ; and therefore the Absolution he pronounc'd, was not founded upon any Infalible Knowledge that he had, of that Notorious Sinner's Repentance, communicated to him by Virtue of the Miraculous Gift of Discerning Spirits. So that, since we find One of the Apostles, Absolving upon Moral Evidence and proofs of Repentance, without the assistance of this Miraculous Power, their Successors may do so likewise, because they have no less Authority in that respect now, than they had then : For indeed as there was in those Days no *absolute Necessity* for such a *Miraculous Power* always to attend the Apostles in the Exercise of their Authority to absolve Sinners (as is plain from the Example of *St. Paul*) because their Authority was *no Consequent* of any such Miraculous Gifts, but previous to them, and Miracles were but *Occasional* and *Transient* Signs of their standing Authority, which was to remain good by Virtue of Christ's Promise of con-

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currence with it to the end of the World ; and consequently is valid when not so attested by Miraculous Gifts, which Christ never promis'd them should constantly attend their Ministrations. So in these Days there is as little need for such a Miraculous Power, always to accompany the Apostles Successors, to discern *Infallibly*, the Truth of Mens Repentance, in order to their Absolution ; because, both in the Apostles Days, and now, Men were, and are still bound, to give Evidences of the sincerity of their Repentance, if they would reap any Benefit from Sacerdotal Ministrations ; and the want of such a Miraculous Power, to discern Mens Hearts, could then, and may still, be supply'd by other Means, *viz.* By strict Inquisition and Examination into their Lives ; and by Tryals, Testimonies, and Evidences, of the sincerity of their Repentance ; which if Men refuse to submit to, they can have no Right even to the Benefits convey'd by Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which none can *profitably* partake of without Sincere Repentance ; and therefore, as the Authority of administering those two Sacraments, remains good and valid, without the Miraculous Gift of Discerning Spirits ; So does the power of absolving Penitents from their

Sins.---And, if after all, there should happen to be an Error in giving Absolution to those who are unworthy of it, there's no more to be charg'd against the Authority of Absolving, than there is against the Authority of administering the two Sacraments, when given to unworthy Communicants; the Error is not owing to the *Insufficiency* of the *Authority*, but either to the *Personal Neglect*, &c. of him who Ministers, or else to the Hypocrisie and Insincerity of the pretended Penitent, or both these together. So that tho' *Clave Errante*, there is *no Absolution*, yet, when both Priest and People, do perform their Duty, the one by *Examining*, &c. and the other by giving *good Testimonies* of, the *Sincerity* of their Repentance, Absolution must be good and valid, and can never fail of its bless'd Effects, because the Authority is Christ's, and he as much concurs with it, as he does with the right and due administration of the Holy Sacraments, which are also Means of conveying to us the *Remission* of our Sins, upon Condition of true and unfeign'd Repentance.

I have been thus long in answering this Objection, because I know it has been too much insisted on by some, who ought rather

ther to have defended the Authority of *Sacerdotal Absolution*, than to have laid such a *Stumbling-block*, as this is, in the way of *Ignorant and heedless People*, who are carry'd away with the seeming plausibility of it, and the Greatness of the Reputation of those who have espous'd it. — But I spare their Names, and proceed.

C 3 CHAP. III.

C H A P. III.

Of Confession of Sins to a Priest.

§. 1. **S**Econdly, I am to prove, That Christ's giving this Absolving Power to his Priests, lays an Obligation upon Men, under several Circumstances, to Confess, or tell their Sins to them, that they may receive the Benefit of their Special and Particular Absolution.

That this their Absolution is a vast and unspeakable Benefit to the Souls of Men, cannot be doubted by any one that has Faith in our Saviour's Promise, for he has given us his Infalible Word for it, That *Whosoever Sins they Remit, they are remitted unto them*, St. John xxi. 23. *Heaven and Earth shall pass away ; but His Words shall not pass away*, St. Mark xiii. 31. And consequently this his Promise of Forgiveness upon their Absolution of the Penitent *shall never fail*. And indeed, who, that has but any Right Sense of the Divine Goodness, can suspect his performance of what he has so solemnly promis'd, when he also reflects on the super-abundant Mercy,
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and Loving-Kindness of *The Apostle and Great High-Priest of our Profession, Christ Jesus*, in appointing Men to be his own Representatives, to supply the want of his Personal Presence among us, to be the Means of conveying to us the same Spiritual Benefits, as he himself would bestow on us, if he were visibly here among us.

Now, it is highly unreasonable to think, that he should constitute such *Vicarious Powers*, and give his Priests such a mighty Authority to act with Men in his stead, and at the same time require from us no Reverence, no Respect, no Duty, nor Obedience to be paid to himself by our due application to his Delegated Authority; — 'tis impossible to be true, that Christ gave His Priests authority to forgive Sins for No purpose, No Benefit at all; this is to detract from his infinite Wisdom, by charging him with giving an Authority not to be exercis'd, and Consequently not to be submitted to, nor to have any Duty paid unto it, which is a Contradiction; since wherever there is Authority, there must be a correspondent Duty owing to it; because where there is no Duty due, there can be No Authority; for Authority and Duty, are

so inseparably connected, that one cannot possibly subsist without the other. And therefore, since he has establish'd this Absolving Power and Authority, we must believe that he expects the Execution of it, and a suitable Duty to be paid unto it; and if so, then it must follow, that 'tis the Duty of Men under various Circumstances, to apply themselves to the Priests for the Benefit of their Absolution, and consequently to Confess their Sins to them for the obtaining of it; otherwise, the Priest on the one hand, can never absolve particular Persons from their Sins, because he knows not either what he is to absolve them from, or whether they are capable of God's Pardon: and on the other hand, Men cannot rationally beg the Sacerdotal Absolution, nor receive any Comfort from it, by reason of the Priest's Ignorance of their Spiritual Condition, and his consequent inability to give them any hopes of the good Effects of his Absolution,—and so at this rate, our Saviour's Design, in giving his Ministers this absolving Power, must be utterly frustrated and made void, by Mens not confessing their Sins to them; but our Lord gave this Power that it might be put in Execution upon proper Occasions; and

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consequently requires Men upon such Occasions, to seek for the Benefit of it by a sincere Repentance, and Confession of their Sins to his Priests. But that this may more evidently appear, I shall give some Instances, wherein the Exercise of this Power is, (besides the Benefit of Absolution) so extraordinarily advantagious to some sort of Persons in particular, that it highly contributes to the undeceiving of their Souls, in rescuing them from the Power of such Dangerous Sins, as without this Excellent help might have plung'd them into everlasting Misery : And consequently it must be the Duty of such Persons at least, to apply themselves to some Discreet and Learned Priest, for the Benefit of Absolution, by a sincere and hearty Confession of their Sins to him. And,

§. 2. *First*, A due Exercise of this Absolving Power, has a natural Tendency, and is a most prevalent Means to preserve and Rescue from *Black Despair*, and the Dreadful Consequences thereof, Those poor Dejected and Disconsolate Wretches, who fancy that they have sin'd themselves beyond the power of God's Mercy, or at least, that he will not accept them to Grace and Pardon. This miserable Condition

tion of such sort of Men, is often an Effect of their Ignorance of the true Nature of their own Sins, and of God's readiness to pardon such Sinners as they are; and hence they are discourag'd from the prosecution of their Duty, and at last neglect even all the means of Salvation. But out of this sad and deplorable Condition, they may be deliver'd, by sueing for the Sacerdotal Absolution; Because the Priest by a due and just Examination of their State, can discover such Signs and Tokens of the Truth of their Repentance (even better than they themselves can do) as to encouragethem to trust in God's pardoning Mercy; to arm themselves with a Divine Faith in his Goodness towards them in particular; to lay aside their Fears, and Despondencies; and to proceed with Christian Courage and Resolution, in the discharge of their several Duties; and all this they will be the more effectually perswaded to, when they find by Experience, that God's own *Ambassador* and *Representative*, after a fair Trial of their Spiritual State, is so well satisfied therewith, as in God's stead, and in his Name, to pronounce their Absolution: — For, from hence they are convinc'd, that God's Minister (who has no other Interest in

in View than the Salvation of their Souls) esteems them to be such Penitents as he himself has promis'd to accept, because, if he had any Reason to think to the contrary, he would never have presum'd to pronounce their Pardon. This gives them right Notions of themselves, and of God's Threats and Promises; so as to enable them to confide in his tender Mercies; and henceforward, to run with cheerfulness the way of God's Commandments. But how all this should be effected without the Confession of their Sins to the Priest is inconceivable; since without his knowledge of their Sins, and of what they have done, or resolve to do by way of amendment, he can have no Notion of the Truth of their Repentance; nor consequently give them any encouraging Hopes of God's Mercy, and then to be sure he can never safely venture to absolve them from their Sins. But it is certainly their Duty to get rid of their distrust of God's Goodness, and to possess themselves of such Notions of his Mercy, and their own Capacity to receive it, as may free them from the sad and deplorable State of Despairing Sinners; and therefore 'tis their Duty to prosecute all such Means as are contributory thereto, among which, this of Confessing their Sins

Sins to a Wise and Discreet Priest, for the obtaining of his Absolution, is the most effectual and prevalent, under their sad and melancholy Circumstance. And for this Reason, our Church in her first Exhortation before the Communion advises, (and such advices from Superiours, are justly interpreted for Commands) in these Words; "Let him come to some Discreet and Learned Minister of God's Word, and open his Grief; i. e. declare to that Minister his Sins, which are the very Essence of his Grief, so far as to fling him almost into Despair, by disquieting his Wounded Conscience; let him then open this his whole Grief; "That by the Ministry of God's Word, he may receive the Benefit of Absolution, together with Ghostly Counsel and Advice, to the quieting of his Conscience, and avoiding of all Scruple and Doubtfulness. And in one of her Rubricks in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, she commands the Priest to move the sick Person "to make a special Confession of his Sins, if he feel his Conscience troubled with any weighty Matter; and that after such Confession, "The Priest shall Absolve him, if he humbly and heartily desire it.

§. 3. Secondly, A due Exercise of the Priests Power to absolve and retain Sins, is a most powerful Antidote against Presumption, and an effectual means to rescue and preserve Men, from the Damning Sin of trusting falsely in God's Mercy while they live in wilful unrepented Wickednesses.

'Tis a sad and melancholy Truth, that abundance of Men are so conceited of their own Righteousness, because they do some things that have an appearance of Goodness, and it may be are really beneficial to other Persons; that notwithstanding their living in the most destructive Sins, they lay claim to Eternal Salvation, and never doubt the Happiness of their future State, but say to themselves, *Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace*; and so at last incur the danger of Perishing for ever in this fatal Delusion. And the Cause of such their miserable Condition, may justly be said to arise from hence, that they are destitute of True and Faithful Monitors, and are never rebuked for their particular Sins: But when Men have a true sense of the Sacerdotal Power of Absolution, and apply themselves diligently to receive the Benefit thereof, then the cause of their Delusion is presently

sently remov'd, because the Priest by his strict Inquiry into their Qualifications for Pardon, puts them in Mind of such things as they never thought of before; and by the Exactness of his Examination, their Sins which they formerly disregarded, are now brought to their Remembrance, and they acknowledge and bewail their Guilt. Thus their false Confidences in their own partial Righteousness, which they were so full of before, are now remov'd, and they no longer presume on God's Mercy, while they live in the commission of wilful Sin.

But this is the Bless'd Effect of their sueing to the Priest for the benefit of his Absolution: And when they do seek for it, it will be unavoidably necessary for them to confess their Sins to him, because without their Confession, he can never determine, whether they are qualify'd or no, for so great a Comfort; he can never discover to them the false ground of their unwarrantable trust in God's Mercy, nor teach them wherein they have been particularly guilty of that dreadful Sin, and so cannot rescue them from the dangerous Consequences that must necessarily follow their commission of it, without a sincere and hearty Repentance.

It is not enough to say, that all this may be done by a due attention to the preaching of God's Word,—for how many Thousands are there, who are so very ignorant, that they can hardly apply any thing that is said to 'em in Sermons, to their own particular Circumstances? And for those that have more Knowledge, and can make due Applications of what they hear, how often may they attend Sermons, and yet never hear their particular Sins and the guilt of them press'd home upon their own Consciences? And indeed, how is it possible for Preachers to reach every individual Man's Sins, and all the Circumstances of them, only in publick Sermons? Doubtless God gave them the power of absolving, that they might have a nearer access to Men's Consciences, than they can have in Publick; that they might more effectually be enabled to save Men from their more close and secret Sins, by a more intimate and particular cognizance of them, and a more immediate and distinct Instruction relating to them, than can possibly be given in General Discourses before a whole Congregation: — and therefore our Church, in one of her Rubricks, in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, Requires that the Priest “*Shall*
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“ *Examine, whether the sick Person repent him*
 “ *truly of his Sins.* Surely this Examination
 does not consist in a bare asking him whe-
 ther he does truly Repent; the Design of
 the Church can never be answer’d by
 putting such a single, and general Que-
 stion to the Sinner, who no doubt will re-
 ply in as general Terms, that he does tru-
 ly Repent. — Can it be just to call this
 an *Examination* of his Repentance? And
 is it Reasonable to believe, that the
 Priest can, upon any good Foundation,
 treat every such Respondent, as a true Pe-
 nitent? when Experience daily demon-
 strates, that many such Ignorant Wret-
 ches will tell you, that they Repent of *all*
their Sins, tho’ at the same time, they
 know *nothing* of some particular grievous
 Sins which they have been guilty of, and
 consequently cannot be said to Repent of
 them: For the Truth of this I appeal to
 those Reverend and truly charitable Priests
 who have in good earnest examin’d the
 Repentance of some poor Creatures upon
 a Sick-bed, and have been oblig’d with
 great Pains and Industry to search the
 Consciences, and to inform the Judgment
 of such Persons, before they could make
 them *sensible* of their Sins, and of the
 true Repentance which God require
 for

for them. — Our Church then designs by this Rubrick, That the Priest shall not satisfie himself, by barely asking the sick Person in General Terms, whether he Truly repents him of his Sins; but that he should *Examine*, i. e. search and try his Repentance, that he may preserve him from that eternal Misery which is due to the Impenitent: And this can never be done to any purpose, without making the Sinner sensible of his Offences, by putting such Questions to him as may oblige him in Answer, to acknowledge his particular Sins, that the Priest may have some competent Knowledge of the Truth of his Repentance, and consequently communicate to him such Spiritual Blessings, as God has authoriz'd him to administer to True Penitents, among which, that of *Sacerdotal Absolution* is doubtless one of the greatest, since God himself has promis'd to confirm it, to all those who truly repent them of their Sins.

§. 4. *Thirdly*, Another great Benefit which Men receive from a due exercise of the Priest's Power to *Absolve* and *Retain* Sins, is, that Notorious Sinners who have been Excommunicated from all the spiritual Privileges of Christ's Church, are
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hereby restor'd to all those Blessed Advantages, by being receiv'd again into the number of the Faithful. Some Men may make as light as they please of the Power of Excommunication ; but others who have a Right sense of Things, do know, that when 'tis justly Executed, 'tis the most dreadful Punishment that can possibly be inflicted on those Souls who are not finally consign'd to eternal Torments; 'tis in our Saviour's Language, the putting of a Man into the State and Condition of a *Heathen* and a *Publican*, and thereby making his Company to be as much detested and avoided by Christians, as the Conversation of Heathens and Publicans was by the Ancient Jews ; 'tis the Retaining and Binding of his Sins upon him : And in *St. Paul's* Dialect, 'tis the Cutting him off, *i. e.* from the Church, which is the Family and Household of God, and the delivering him over unto *Satan*, and consequently to the power of the rest of the Apostate Angels. This Authority of Binding and retaining Men's Sins, was given to the Apostles and their Successors, and such as they should vest with it, by Christ himself ; for says he, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and; whose-soever Sins ye Retain, they are Retained.*

tained. Which is not only a grant of Authority, but also a promise of Ratifying and Confirming in Heaven, whatsoever should be justly executed on Earth by Virtue thereof; which makes the Case of justly Excommunicated Persons, to be so miserable, that God himself, Binds their Sins on them, (when the Priest retains them) and will by no means Absolve them, without their Repentance and due application to obtain the *Sacerdotal Remission*: For, since God's own Representative has justly Bound their Sins upon them, the Divine Veracity has engag'd that they shall be Bound also in Heaven; and therefore, God himself will not alter the Sentence, so long as the Delinquents lie justly under it: And they are justly liable to this Condemnation, till they Repent, and sue for the Priestly Absolution; because, without Repentance, there is no Pardon for Sin, and while they obstinately refuse to sue for the Priest's Remission, their Sins are still retain'd, because not absolv'd by the Priest; and consequently God, who concurs with the just Sentence of his Priests, does continue to Retain their Sins.

Hence we see, how necessary 'tis for such notorious Sinners to sue for the *Sacerdotal Absolution*, that they may be loos'd from those Sins for which they were Excommunicated, and so receiv'd again into the Communion of the Church, and consequently into God's Grace and Favour. But this they cannot obtain, without so confessing their Guilt, as that the Priest may be sensible of their Repentance; and he can never have any Notion of their Repentance, if they do not make known to him their acknowledgment of their Guilt; so that, they must express their Repentance by Confessing to the Priest their Guilt; and consequently they must in that Confession, acknowledge to him the Sin or Sins of which they confess themselves Guilty; — and therefore 'tis the Duty of such Excommunicated Persons, to confess those Sins to the Priest for which they were cast out of the Church, that they may, by Virtue of his Absolution, be loos'd from them, and receiv'd again into Her Fellowship and Communion.

§. 5. In the *Mosaic* Dispensation the power of determining the Legal *Cleanness* or *Uncleanness* of Persons and Things, was committed by God himself to the Priests,
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to prefigure that more Spiritual Authority, which he afterwards gave to all Christian Priests to Absolve and retain Sins : Thus 'twas the Jewish Priests Office to Examine the suspected Leprous Person, and as he found his Plague, to pronounce him either Clean, or Unclean, *Levit. cap. xiii, xiv.* But the supposed Leper was to be brought to the Priest, and to submit to the strictness of his Search, and Scrutiny into the Nature of his Scab : Even so, 'tis the peculiar Office of the Christian Priest, to Examine the *Spiritual Leper*, in order to the pronouncing of him Spiritually Clean, or Unclean ; *i. e.* in order to the absolving of him from his Spiritual Leprosie, his Sins, or else to retain them, till he has given sufficient proofs of his Repentance. This necessarily infers, that the Sinner must submit to the Priest's Examination of his Conscience ; and consequently, that he must confess the state and condition thereof to the Priest, in order to his Purification.

The first Converts to Christianity, were so sensible of this Duty, that 'tis recorded of them in the Sacred Oracles, that "*Many who Believed, came and confessed and shewed their Deeds,* Acts xix. 18. — And *Sapphira*, the Wife of *Ananias*, persisting

in her Hypocrisie, and not acknowledging her Sin to St. Peter, when he charg'd her saying, "*Tell me whether ye sold the Land for so much*, Acts v. 8, was punish'd with an immediate Miraculous Death, as well for not confessing her and her Husband's Sin, as for the Sin it self; the Punishment of which she might have escap'd, if she had but repented and confess'd her Sin to St. Peter when he requir'd her.

§. 6. *Fourthly*. The last Circumstance I shall mention, wherein Men ought to confess their Sins to a Priest, is that of Sickness: — And for this, the Holy Ghost, in the General Epistle of St. James, cap. v. 14, 15, 16. Commands us thus; "*Is any Sick among you? Let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with Oil in the Name of the Lord; And the Prayer of Faith shall save the Sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed Sins, they shall be forgiven him: — Confess your Faults one to another, and Pray one for another, that ye may be Healed; the effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much.* — And then in the 17th Verse he gives an Instance of the efficacy of Elias the Prophet's Prayer. What I shall say

say as to this Command of the Holy Ghost, will, I doubt not, be call'd *Popery*, as many of the Essentials of Christianity are call'd by the *Libertines* and *Latitudinarians* of our Age, which has a mighty Effect upon some Ignorant People, who do not see into the bottom of those Reviler's Designs.—But let them say what they will, this Passage of the Holy Scriptures, requires some now Neglected and Despis'd Duties, which the Primitive Christians, long before Christianity was corrupted by the Innovations of *Popery*, thought themselves oblig'd in Conscience to perform; among which, this of Confession of Sins to a Priest was one; and the Unction of the sick with Oil, was another; the Benefit of which anointing, with respect to the Spiritual Design thereof, is certainly as necessary to us now, as it was to those in the purest Ages of Christianity; and so our first Reformers thought, who retain'd this Apostolic Rite and Ceremony in our *English* Liturgy, in the Reign of King *Edward* the VIth.. But that the Reader may see, that this Passage of St. *James* requires the sick Person to Confess his Sins to the Priest, let him consult the Learned Doctor *Hammond's* Paraphrase and Annotations upon the Place, and he will

find, that the Sick must send for the Bishop, or whosoever is by or under him Ordain'd, for such Offices as the giving of Spiritual Directions and Counsel to enable the Sick to discern his own Guilts;—that if upon Examination, he be found to have committed any wasting Sin, or Sins, 'tis useful that the sick Person first fit himself for, and then receive Absolution from the Bishop, or other Minister Ordain'd by him; which is the Sense of the latter part of the 15th Vease; “ *If he have committed Sins, they shall be forgiven him*; or, as the Original has it, “ *Absolution or Remission shall be given him*. And then 'tis added in our *English*, ver. 16. *Confess your Faults one to another*: But the King's Greek Manuscript connects these to the foregoing Words, and says, *Confess therefore your Sins one to another*; i. e. for that Reason, that Absolution and Remission may be given you who are sick, *Confess your Sins one to another*. The only thing to be question'd here, is, whether *Confessing one to another*, signifies *Confessing to the Person who Visits the Sick*; or whether it means, only acknowledging to our Neighbours our Faults committed against them.—Now, tho' I will not deny, but that these Words may be taken in this latter Sense, because
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the acknowledgment of Wrongs done to our Neighbours, and asking their Pardon, and making them Restitution, if we are able, is certainly a necessary Qualification for that Absolution which the Sick is to receive from the Elder or Bishop, &c. Yet, that this is not the Only, nor indeed the Primary or chief design of the Words I must assert, from their immediate connection to the preceeding Words, which require the Priestly Absolution; and this Duty of *Confessing one to another*, being added with a "*Therefore*, shews the Reason why the sick must Confess, *viz.* That he may obtain the Absolution of his Spiritual Visitor before spoken of; ——— and then to whom the Confession must be made, for this Absolution, is plain by this "*One to another*; One is the sick Person who is to Confess, *Another*, is the Minister of Christ, who is to receive the Confession: for, this Minister is call'd to the sick for his Spiritual Benefit; this Minister is the *only Person* which the *Text* supposes to be present at the Examination of the sick Man's Conscience, For indeed, it cannot be proper that any other should then be present at so weighty an Enquiry and Scrutiny; this Minister is the only *Another* Person then present, that has Power from Christ

Christ to Forgive or Absolve Penitents ; and therefore the Word *Another*, must be referr'd to the spiritual Elder before spoken of in the Text ; and consequently, by *Confessing One to Another*, in this Place, must mean the Sick to the Priest : This is confirm'd by the following Context, "*And Pray One for Another, that ye may be healed.*" Which still has a reference to the sick Person and the Elder, and signifies, that the Minister must Pray for the Sick, that he "*may be Healed* ; for, as an Encouragement to this Duty of the Minister, and to strengthen both his and the sick Man's Faith, the Holy Ghost adds "*The effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man, availeth much ; i. e. the Prayer of such a Man of God, as the Elder before spoken of availeth much ;* — in Witness whereof, he, in the next Words, gives us an Instance of the Efficacy of the Prayers of *Elias*, the *Authorized Prophet* and Man of God, who was a Righteous Man ; and thereby Explains what is meant by the Righteous Man before-mention'd, *viz.* A Holy Authoriz'd Minister, a Man of God, such as the Elder or Bishop, &c. who is call'd to Pray for the sick Person. Thus every part of this Text of *St. James*, has a necessary reference to the Elder and the Sick,

Sick, who calls for him; and therefore, when 'tis said, *Confess your Faults one to another*, 'tis meant, that the Sick should Confess to the Priest; except the Opposers will have the Priest to make his Confession to the Sick; for there are no other Persons mention'd to Confess and to be Confess'd to. St. Peter in his First Epistle cap. v. 5. commands us thus "*All of you be subject one to another*"; the Context determines the meaning of this "*One to another*", by the Persons there spoken of; for in the first part of the Verse, the Apostle says, "*Ye Younger, submit your selves unto the Elder*"; and then immediately adds, "*Yea, all of you be subject one to another*"; that is, *all of you Younger before-nam'd, be subject to your Elders above-mention'd*; or all of you be subject *One* (that is the Younger) to *Another*, that is, the Elder. So when 'tis said, "*Confess therefore your Sins one to another*", the Context must determine who must Confess, and who must be Confess'd to, by the Persons therein mention'd, and they are no other than the Sick and the Elder; and therefore, the Sick must confess his Faults, and this Confession must be made to the Elder; *i. e.* the Bishop or Priest; or, *Confess your Faults One, i. e.* the Sick, to *Another*; *i. e.* the Spiritual Elder.

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Upon the whole, when St. *James* commands us to *Confess one to another*, he means no other, than that we must confess to another who has Power and Authority to receive our Confession, and that is the Priest, who has the power of Absolution; — just as St. *Peter's* Command, that We must *all be subject one to another*, means, that we must pay Subjection to those to whom 'tis due, *i. e.* our Superiours.

But to conclude this Head; tho' it should (contrary to all Reason) be allow'd, that the Letter of this Command, "*Confess your Faults one to another*", related only to that Confession which should be made to our Neighbour, of the Wrongs we have done him; yet still it will follow by parity of Reason, that Confession ought to be made to God's Minister; — For, if I must in some Cases, Confess to my Neighbour, the Wrongs I have done him, It must be upon this Foundation, that 'tis in his Power to Pardon me those Wrongs upon some Conditions, and in some Degree or other; else what need of Confessing to him, and why should God enjoyn us this Duty? Our Saviour requires us, that if *our Brother trespass against us and repent, we should forgive him*, St. *Luke*

xvii. 3. This shews, that the Wronged have Power to forgive; and this power of Forgiving, is the Motive and Foundation upon which the Trespasser Repents and confesses his Faults to him. From hence arises this Maxim, That Wrongs committed, must in some Cases be Confess'd to those who have a Power of Pardoning, and Absolving from the Penalties due to those Wrongs; otherwise what signifies their pardoning Power, if no Confession be due to it? And therefore, the Sins we have committed against God, ought to be Confess'd to his *Proxies* and *Representatives*, whom he hath vested with *his own Authority to Absolve* us from all our Sins, and in his stead to Insure and Seal our Pardons, upon due Evidence of our Repentance.

But not to be any further prolix upon this Subject, I proceed to prove,

CHAP. IV.

C H A P. IV. Of P E N A N C E.

§. 1. **T**Hirdly, That Sinners are bound to submit to all the Prudent and Lawful Injunctions which the Church, *i. e.* the Spiritual Governours thereof shall lay on them by way of Penance, for the mortification of their Sins.

This will necessarily follow from that Power and Authority which Bishops and Priests have to Absolve and Retain Sins; for Absolution cannot be given but upon proper Evidences of Repentance; and when those Evidences are not only wanting, but the contrary affections to some grievous Sins discover themselves, then 'tis time to interpose the Spiritual Authority of Retaining those Sins, till the Sinner gives sufficient Testimony of his Penitential abhorrence and detestation of them; the way to oblige him to this, when all other gentler means fail, is by Excommunication and delivering him unto *Satan*; the Effect of which is, *1st.*
" The depriving the Offender of those daily
" Means which are in Christianity afforded,
and

" and ordinarily used to eject Satan and the
 " power of his Kingdom out of the Heart;
 " such are the Prayers of the Church, the pub-
 " lick use of the Word of God, and the Sacra-
 " ment of the Lord's Supper. And, 2dly. " In
 " the Apostles times, there was a sad Conse-
 " quence of this Excommunication, viz. Corporal
 " Power and Possession, and Inflictions of
 " Satan, on those who were deliver'd up to him,
 " to the Destruction of the Flesh; i. e. to
 " the inflicting Bodily Diseases on the Sinner,
 " Hammond on 1 Cor. v. 5. That the Spirit
 " may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus.

This was a dreadful Punishment, and the
 most severe Penance that could be inflicted;
 and that the Apostles, and other Spiritual
 Governours of the Church, had power to
 lay it on Sinners, to put them to a Necessi-
 ty of Reforming their Lives, is abundantly
 evident from, 1 Cor. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Verses.
 And tho' this Corporal Infliction of Disea-
 ses and Torments, is not now the visible
 Effect of Excommunication, yet still the
 Spiritual Effect of being depriv'd of the
 means of Salvation, by being cut off from
 any participation in the Prayers of the
 Church, in the publick use of God's Word,
 and in the reception of the blessed Sa-
 crament, remains as firm as in the Apo-
 stles Days; and exposes the Sinner to the
 Spiriti-

Spiritual, and therefore more Dangerous Assaults of the Invisible Powers of Darkness, than the infliction of those Bodily Torments and Diseases were ; for hereby he is depriv'd of all Communion with God, and consequently of all that spiritual Armour and Defence, whereby the Members of the Church are enabled to quench all the fiery Darts of the Devil : The Power of inflicting this heavy Penance, is still in the Spiritual Governours of the Church ; Because the Church is the Spiritual Kingdom of Christ, and the Governours thereof are his Vicegerents, as having their Commission convey'd to them, Only from him their Spiritual Sovereign, without the interposition of any secular Worldly Powers whatsoever ; and therefore they must have sufficient spiritual Authority for the Government of this Spiritual Kingdom, otherwise, their being made his Representatives, in being *sent by him, even as he was sent by his Father*, and having the Stewardship of his Word and Sacraments committed to them, would be to no purpose at all ; — and so all Men in the Church would be level'd to an Equality consequently, and every the most profligate Sinner have an equal Right to all the external Privileges that belong to the obedient Members of this Spiritual Society ; and in

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consequence of this, all the Divine Mysteries of our most Holy Religion, must be prostituted and expos'd, to the vile Prophanations of the most Impudent and most Incorrigible Sinners, without any Remedy for such daring, such monstrous Wickedness. But this is so egregiously opposite to all the Designs of Christianity, that, only to mention it, is sufficient to shew, not only the Impiety, but also the very Inconsistency and Contradiction thereof; and therefore the *Spiritual Vicegerents* of our Lord Jesus Christ, must have sufficient Power and Authority to Rule and Govern his Church, and consequently, to inflict the Penance of Excommunication on Notorious Offenders, for their Reformation, and for a Terror to all others; without which, the Ends of Spiritual Government can never be obtain'd, nor the Power of Binding and Loosing, of Absolving and retaining Sins, wherewith our Lord has vested the Governours of his Church, be of any Use or Benefit whatsoever.

S. 2. Seeing then, that the Spiritual Governours of the Church, have Power and Authority to inflict this utmost and severest Penance for the mortification of Sin, it must needs be, that they have Authority

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rity to enjoin all such lower degrees of Penance as have a tendency to the mortification of Sin; and which when submitted to, are declarative of the sincerity of the Sinner's Repentance, and of no Worldly Benefit or Advantage to the Imposer of them: Because (here being no room for suspicion of Secular Interest in our Spiritual Governors imposing such Penances) their Authority for that which is Most, includes Authority for what is Less; their Power to enjoin the Greatest, includes, and necessarily contains their Authority to require a less Penance, when it is subservient to the Ends of Spiritual Government, the restoration of lost and undone Sinners.

For this Reason, our Lord requires, in the case of a Brother's Trespassing against us, that when we cannot reclaim him, by making him give us reasonable Satisfaction, we must "tell it to the Church; i. e. the Governing part of it; and that "if he neglect to hear the Church, he should be "to us as an Heathen Man and a Publican; that is, he should be excluded our Communion, and abandon'd our Society and Conversation, St. Matt. xviii. 17. Wherein 'tis evident, that Christ requires the Offending Brother's Submission to the award and Determination of the Governours

nours of the Church ; and this award can be nothing less than a Penance to the Offender, be it either to acknowledge his Fault, or to make any Restitution to his wronged Brother ; — and upon his neglecting to submit to this Penance, our Lord requires to set a mark of Infamy on him ; and promises in the next Words, *Whatsoever* (upon such accounts as these) ye, [the Governours of the Church] shall Bind on Earth, shall be Bound in Heaven, Verse 18. — i. e. “ Whomsoever (thus neglecting your Determinations), “ you shall cast out of the Church on Earth, shall, “ without Repentance, and submission to “ your Censures, and Reformation upon “ them, and sincere desire to reconcile and “ approve themselves to you, be by Me, “ excluded from Heaven : — These Censures of yours inflicted by this Commis- sion from me, shall be back’d by Me ; (*Hammond on the Place*). And further, that this Authority of imposing wholesome Penance upon Sinners, might not be precarious and uncertain, as to the Persons who should exercise it, and the extent of their Power, our Saviour tells his Apostles, “ *When the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel,*

St. Matt. xix. 28. Thereby making them and their Successors the Bishops, his Spiritual Viceroys, enthroning them in their Episcopal Chairs, which the Scripture here, and the Primitive Christians in conformity thereto, call Thrones, and giving them Power and Authority to be the Supreme Spiritual Rulers and Judges over his whole Spiritual Kingdom, the Church Militant, represented here by the twelve Tribes of *Israel*; And therefore to Judge and Censure Sinners, and in proportion to their Crimes, to enjoin them greater or lesser Penances, proper for the effecting of their Reformation and Amendment. I say, our Lord here, gives the Spiritual Princes and Judges of his Church, Power to inflict *greater and lesser Penances* in proportion to Men's Sins; for this Reason, Because, otherwise, (since they have Authority to impose the Greatest Penance) they would have it in their Power either to punish all Sins of what Degree soever, but *with One only and that the severest Penance*, which is absurd; or else not at all to punish any other than the most *Notorious and Flagitious Wickednesses*, and so all other Sins to go and remain Uncensur'd and Unreform'd, which is equally Ridiculous,

culous, as being utterly contrary to all the Ends and Designs of any Supreme Power of Judicature whatsoever.

§. 3. There is then Authority in the Bishops of the Church, to appoint greater and lesser Penances in proportion to Men's Sins; and consequently there must be the like tho' not equal Power in the Priests, who receive it from, and exercise it in subordination to their Bishops: — But what these Penances are, and when they shall be prescrib'd, is left to the Wisdom and Prudence of our Spiritual Governors, always provided, that they be such *Only* as are suitable to the Ends of Spiritual Government, which was instituted purely to reconcile Rebellious Sinners to their offended God, and to keep them in due Subjection and Obedience to his Divine Will and Pleasure, that they may obtain Eternal Life.

I shall not go about to prove, That the Penances of abstaining for some time from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; of Fasting and Watching; of Abstinence and Self-denial; of refraining the Company of our beloved Companions, and the forsaking of our profitable Employments, when they are the cause of our Sins; of Restitution

and Satisfaction to our Neighbours for Wrongs done them; of extraordinary Alms to the Poor and Indigent, when we know not to whom to make Restitution; of publick acknowledging and revocation of our Wickednesses, and the like; I say, I shall not go about to prove, that these Penances are directly instrumental to the Ends of Spiritual Government, they have been always thought so, and enjoyn'd and practis'd as such, by the Best of Men in all Ages: And therefore there's no Reason to question, that the Governours of the Church have Power and Authority to enjoyn them, since some of 'em are Duties, whether they require them or no; and others of them are proper Deleteries and Remedies for Sin, and significant Evidences and Signs and Tokens of Repentance.

§. 4. Hence our Church, in the Preface to her Office for *Asb-Wednesday*, call'd the *Commination*, tells us, that, "*In the Primitive Church there was a Godly Discipline; that at the beginning of Lent, such Persons as stood convicted of Notorious Sin, were put to open Penance, and punish'd in This World, that their Souls might be saved in the Day if the Lord; and that others admonish'd by their Example, might*"
 " be

*“ be the more afraid to offend : And then
 wishes that “ the said Discipline may be re-
 “ stored again : Which, would to God she
 would not only wish, but exert her ut-
 most Power to restore, for the Good and
 Welfare of Mens Souls, which languish
 and perish, for want of such Spiritual Cor-
 rectives : Something towards this she does
 enjoin and require of us, in her appointed
 Days of Fasting and Abstinence, which
 she commands us to observe ; — and in
 her Requiring every Parish Priest to ob-
 serve these following Rules with respect to
 Wicked Persons, who offer to come to the
 Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, — viz.
 “ If any of those be an open and notorious evil
 “ Liver, or have done any Wrong to his
 “ Neighbours, by Word or Deed, so that the
 “ Congregation be thereby offended, the Curate
 “ having knowledge thereof, shall call him and
 “ advertise him, that in any wise he presume not
 “ to come to the Lord’s Table, until he hath
 “ openly declar’d himself to have truly repent-
 “ ed and amended his former naughty Life ;
 “ that the Congregation may thereby be satis-
 “ fied, which before were offended ; and that
 “ he hath recompens’d the Parties to whom
 “ he hath done Wrong, or at least, declare him-
 “ self to be in full purpose so to do, as soon as
 “ he conveniently may.*

“ The same Order shall the Curate use with
 “ those betwixt whom he perceiveth Malice and
 “ Hatred to reign, ~~Not~~ Suffering them to
 “ be partakers of the Lord’s Table, until he
 “ know them to be reconciled. And if one of the
 “ Parties so at Variance, be content to forgive,
 “ from the bottom of his Heart, all that the
 “ other hath trespassed against him, and to
 “ make amends for that he hath offended; and
 “ the other Party will not be perswaded to a
 “ Godly Unity, but remain still in his Frow-
 “ ardness and Malice; the Minister in that
 “ Case, ought to admit the penitent Person to
 “ the Holy Communion, and ~~Not~~ him that is
 “ Obstinate. Provided that every Minister
 “ so Repelling any,—shall be oblig’d to give
 “ an account of the same to the Ordinary, with-
 “ in fourteen Days at the farthest: And the
 “ Ordinary shall proceed against the offending
 “ Person, according to the Canon. Thus the
 Priests of our Church have Authority not
 only to Repel some Notorious Offenders,
 from the Table of the Lord, but also to
 enjoin them the Penance of Openly decla-
 ring their Repentance; and consequently
 of publickly acknowledging their former
 Guilt. And in her Constitutions and Ca-
 nons Ecclesiastical, Canon 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,
 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. 59. 72, 73. 75, 76. 79.
 93, 94. 97. 108, 109, 110. 114. 121: 126,

127, 128, 129: 131, 133, 134, 135, 136.
 138, 139, 140, 141.— She threatens
 Sinners of several sorts with Excommuni-
 cation; that they shall not be restor'd until
 they Repent and publicly revoke their
 Wickedness; that some of them shall suf-
 fer Deprivation, and others Suspension, &c.
 according to their several Demerits; all
 which are Penances grievous to Flesh and
 Blood, but yet wholesome and necessary
 for the Reformation of Men's Lives, to
 oblige them to evidence their Repentance,
 and make it as conspicuous as their Sins
 were heinous, and to be a Terror and
 Dread to all others, that they may escape
 the Divine Wrath and Vengeance. But
O Tempora! O Mores! how fearful is that
 Account which some must give to the all-
 seeing Judge of Heaven and Earth, for
 hindering, and others for neglecting the
 Observation and due Execution of these
 just and wholesome Penances; by reason
 of which obstruction, and want of Spirit-
 ual Discipline, many are now suffer'd to
 eat and drink their own Damnation, by
 being admitted (wreaking as they are in
 their abominable Sins) to the Tremendous
 Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our
 Crucified Saviour!

s. 5. But spiritual Rebellion is now grown Triumphant, and threatens the destruction of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom. We are now so far from being what *Libertines* call *Priest-Ridden*, that we are endeavouring to subject the Priests Authority to the vile and base Humour of the *Beasts of the People*. We are not only disobedient to the Laws of the Church, and kick and spurn at her Holy Discipline; we not only refuse to submit to her Medicinal Correctives and remedies for Sin, but we impudently force her sacred Fences, and compell the Dispensers of the Divine Mysteries, to give *that which is Holy unto the Dogs*, and to cast their Pearls before such *Swine* as trample them under their Feet, and turn again and rend and tear even the Body of Christ, his Holy Spouse the Church, by their avow'd Schisms and Seperations and resisting and using their utmost endeavours to destroy and make void, the Authority of our Lord conferr'd by him on his Priests and Ministers.

But let us not be Deceiv'd, God is not Mock'd; *He that despises them despises him*, and he will certainly punish all contemners of his Authority committed to them, with a Vengeance answerable to their daring

ring Impiety. For, as *Samuel* told *Saul*, who disobey'd the Divine Command laid on him by the Prophet of God—*Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft, and Stubbornness is as Iniquity and Idolatry*, 1 Sam. xv. 23. And therefore *St. Jude* pronounces concerning those who despise Dominion, “*Woe unto them; — they have perish'd in the Gainsaying of Corah; — to them is reserved the Blackness of Darkness for ever,*” *Ep. of St. Jude*, Verses 8. 11. and 13.

§. 6. On the other Hand, *Obedience is better than Sacrifice, and to Hearken, than the Fat of Rams*, 1 Sam. xv. 22. And God has given us a very remarkable Instance of his great Value and Esteem thereof, by causing the Obedience of the House of the *Rechabites*, who abstain'd from drinking Wine, Building, or having of Houses, sowing Seed, and Planting, or having Vineyards, at the Command of their Father *Jonadab*, to be recorded, and stand as an everlasting Memorial in the Sacred Oracles, for our Example; and not only so, but he highly Rewards this their Self-denial, and Submission to their Father's Will; commanding his Prophet to tell the *Rechabites*, “*Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, because you have obey'd the Command-*

“ *mandment of Jonadab your Father, and*
 “ *kept all his Precepts, and done according*
 “ *unto all that he hath commanded you;*
 “ *Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the*
 “ *God of Israel, Jonadab, the Son of Re-*
 “ *chab, shall not want a Man to stand before*
 “ *me for ever, Jer. xxxv. 18, 19.* This
 necessarily implies, that it was their Du-
 ty to obey that Command of their Fa-
 ther, tho’ it did intrench upon what our
 Sons of Belial will call their Liberty and
 Property; for they Obey’d the Commandment of
 their Father; ’tis not said, they comply’d
 with his Request; no, they were Com-
 manded this Self-denial, and because ’twas
 the Command of their Father, therefore
 they held themselves bound and oblig’d
 to Obey it; and God himself highly ex-
 tols and rewards their Obedience.

Since then, tis the Duty of Children to
 submit to and obey the Commands of their
 Natural Parents, with relation to things
 otherwise Indifferent, even in Cases which
 it may be, have no tendency to the Chil-
 drens spiritual Advantage, but are enjoyn’d
 them probably for temporal Ends and Pur-
 poses only, and yet oblige them to several
 Acts of Self-denial and Mortification, as
 in the Example here before us: Much
 more must it be the Duty of Christians to
 subject

subject themselves to the wise and prudent Injunctions of their Spiritual Parents, the Stewards of the Mysteries of God, who Regenerate them mediately into a State of Salvation, by Baptism, which is a Benefit infinitely beyond what their Natural Birth could intitle them to; and who nourish their Souls unto Eternal Life, by the Ministration of the Word, and Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, which infinitely excels any the best support and maintenance administred to them by their Natural Parents as such,—and who further, have Authority from God himself, to absolve them from their Spiritual Lapses when Repented of, and to restore them to the Divine Favour, which their Natural Parents cannot possibly do by Virtue of such their Paternity: Much more, I say, must it be the Duty of Christians to submit to and obey the wholesome Commands of these Spiritual Fathers and Guides of Souls, when they are such as are effectual to the mortification of Sin, and have no other aim and design, than their necessary Reformation, and eternal Salvation: For, as the excellency of Persons and Things, which have a relation to what is Supernatural and Eternal, exceeds and is superior to, the Excellency of such Persons

and

and Things, as relate to what is but Natural and Temporal: So our obligation of Obedience and Submission, with respect to the former, is more Binding than our Duty, which relates to the Latter: Our Lord himself confirms this, by affirming concerning such as would follow him;
*" If any man come to me, and hate not his
 " Father and Mother, and Wife and Children,
 " and Brethren and Sisters, yea, and his own
 " Life also, he cannot be my Disciple, St. Luke*
 xiv. 26. *i. e.* He cannot be my Disciple, if he does not in comparison of me, hate them, or chuse to leave them for my sake, when his affection to them, stands in competition with his Duty to me.

§. 7. To conclude this Head; tho' *Atheists, Deists, and Libertines*, and all the scandalous Club of the Sons of Belial, Priest-haters, Enthusiasts, Schismaticks, and Hereticks, belch out their Poysonous and Diabolical Blasphemies, and Rave against our Lord's Divine Institution of the Christian Priesthood, and the unalienable Rights and Powers thereof, and particularly the Church's Authority to Retain Sins, and ordain wholesome Remedies and suitable Penances for them; These are most certain Truths, *That Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. xv. 50.*
 — *" That*

— “ That if we live after the Flesh, we shall
 “ die, Rom. viii. 13. i. e. we shall die to
 eternal Happiness, and live in everlasting
 Misery. — That we must therefore “ Mor-
 “ tify the Deeds of the Body, Rom. viii, 13.
 “ and crucify our Flesh, with its Affections
 “ and Lusts, Gal. v. 24. That, “ If our
 “ right Eye (i. e. any thing as dear to
 us, as that is) “ offend us, (i. e. cause us to
 sin) “ we must pluck it out and cast it from
 “ us ; and if our right hand offend us ,
 “ we must cut it off, and cast it from
 “ us ; for it is profitable for us, that one of
 “ our Members should perish, and not that our
 “ whole Body should be cast into Hell, St. Matt.
 v. 29, 30. In short, we must “ Deny our
 “ selves, and take up our Cross, to follow
 “ Christ, St. Matt. xvi. 24. And all those
 who are ignorant, or forgetful of the time
 and manner of performing these great and
 necessary Duties of Mortification and Self-
 denial, and, O how unspeakably great is
 their Number ? are bound to attend to,
 and diligently observe and obey, the pru-
 dent Instructions, and salutary Injuncti-
 ons of those Spiritual Guides whom God
 has set over them “ To open their Eyes, and
 “ to turn them from Darkness to Light, and
 “ from the Power of Satan, unto God, that
 “ they may receive forgiveness of Sins, and In-
 “ heritance among them that are Sanctified, &c.
 Acts

Acts xxvi. 18. For which Blessed Ends, such Spiritual Guides have Authority to
 “ *shew unto them that they should repent and*
 “ *turn to God, and do Works meet for Repen-*
 “ *tance,* Verse 20. And if Sinners do not know, they must learn what these Works are, and submit to the authoriz’d Guides of their Souls, when they teach and require them to perform them.

§. 8. For, says the Holy Ghost, “ *Obey*
 “ *them that have the Rule over you, and sub-*
 “ *mit your selves, for they watch for your*
 “ *Souls, as they that must give account, that*
 “ *they may do it with Joy, and not with*
 “ *Grief, for that is Unprofitable for you,* Heb: xiii. 17. This lays an Obligation upon us both to obey, and submit to, the Spiritual Governours of the Church; Obedience is no more than *Doing* the Lawful Things they command: but SUBMISSION implies much more, for ’tis an abasing or bringing down; a humbling, or putting under; and therefore signifies that we must abase and bring down our proud false Understandings; and make our aspiring, conceited, and but pretended Reasons, to humble and subject themselves to the *Authority commanding*, and necessarily presupposes, that the Thing enjoyn’d is very likely to meet

meet with the oppositions of Flesh and Blood, and all those false Arguings which Men naturally betake themselves to, that they may avoid the unpleasing Discipline which the Governours of the Church have Authority to impose on them, for the mortification of their sinful Lusts and Passions: And the Reason why we must thus submit, is, because *They watch for our Souls, as they that must give Account*; they have the Spiritual Guardianship and Oversight of our Souls; they are the authoriz'd Inspectors and Monitors, the Guides, and Directors, to whose Care and Government God has committed us; and of this their great Trust, they must give an Account to him, who expects, and will require of them a diligent and faithful discharge of their Duty, and will most certainly Punish all those who hinder or refuse to submit to their due Execution thereof, in appointing proper Correctives for Sin, and Exemplary Tokens and Signs of true Repentance; the want of which being not only *unprofitable*, but also very mischievous and destructive to the Health and safety of our Immortal Souls, as Experience abundantly demonstrates from the dreadful Desolation which we see Christianity now reduc'd to, over the Face of the whole Earth.

C H A P. V.

*Of Unauthoriz'd Lay-Baptism; that it
is Null and Void.*

§. 1. **I** Proceed now to what we find asserted by our Author, in favour of *Lay-Baptism*, Pag. 22, 23, 24. in these Words; “ There is a Conceit lately got
“ in among us, that denies all who are
“ not Baptiz’d among us to be Christians,
“ shuts them out of Christ’s Covenant,
“ and thinks them no better than Hea-
“ thens. A Notion, that tho’ it once got
“ into some Churches, who thought that
“ the Baptism of Hereticks was of no va-
“ lue, and was to be repeated upon their
“ coming into the Church, yet was so
“ Solemnly Condemn’d and Rejected by
“ all the Churches of God, now for above
“ Fourteen hundred Years. In Popery
“ the Midwives generally Baptize: Yet,
“ tho’ this is against an exprefs Rule of
“ the Apostles, that a Woman ought not
“ to speak in the Church; none of the
“ Reformed ever thought of Re-baptizing
“ the Persons so Baptized; nor did our
Church

“ Church at the Restoration ever enter-
 “ tain the least motion of this sort: But
 “ now this is receiv’d by many.—The
 “ common Topick for supporting this
 “ wild unheard of Paradox, is, That the
 “ Commission to Preach and Baptize, was
 “ given to the Apostles, so that none but
 “ their Successors can pretend to it. But
 “ has not every Christian in Cases of
 “ Necessity, a Right to Teach and Instruct
 “ another, and to perswade him to be-
 “ come a Christian? And therefore, tho’
 “ it is a very just part of the Order of the
 “ Church, that none but Persons initia-
 “ ted into Holy Functions should Baptize
 “ and Preach, yet Necessity is above all
 “ Rules: In such a Case, they may Bap-
 “ tize as well as Preach. The Faith of
 “ the Trinity gives every Man a Right
 “ to Baptize; and this has been the con-
 “ stant Sense of the Church for above
 “ Fourteen hundred Years, which in a
 “ Ritual Matter is certainly of great Au-
 “ thority. They reckon’d that Baptism is
 “ the Gift of Christ to his Church, when
 “ given in the Name of the Father,
 “ Son, and Holy Ghost. It is Christ’s
 “ Baptism, be they who give it, Here-
 “ ticks, or Orthodox, Clergy or Laity;
 “ and in the latter Ages, Men or Women.

" This is not the only step some are making towards Popery.

All this our Author asserts in behalf of Lay Baptism; and I shall consider what he affirms in Order as it lies.

§. 2. 1st. He says, "*There is a Conceit lately got in among us, that denies all who are not Baptized among us, to be Christians, shuts them out of Christ's Covenant, and thinks them no better than Heathens.* Now, not to Carp too much at what is the Grammatical Sense of "*all who are not Baptiz'd among us*, which may signifie all Persons Unbaptiz'd; or all such as are not Baptiz'd by our own Ministers: I don't question but he designs thereby, all who are not Baptiz'd by Ministers Episcopally Ordain'd. But he should have let the World know, that the Conceit (as he is pleas'd to call it) is really this, *That all who are pretendedly Baptiz'd by Lay Persons, either without, or in Opposition to the Episcopal Authority, are not Baptiz'd at all, have receiv'd no Christian Baptism, and consequently are not by the Virtue of such a No Baptism, inroll'd into the number of Christ's Visible Church; are not in any Explicite Covenant with Christ, and are no more than Heathens are.* This is what has been lately asserted, and endeavour'd to

be prov'd: And 'tis against this that our Author ought to have exerted his utmost strength, if it be a false Conceit. In order to prove which, it is necessary for him to demonstrate, either, That Persons are Inroll'd Members of Christ without Christian Baptism; or else, that Lay Men, without, or in Opposition to, the Bishop's Commission, have the Power of Baptism, and therefore of constituting Churches. The first is contrary to the whole Tenour of the Sacred Oracles; and the latter is not only contrary to the very Nature of that Commission which Christ gave to Baptize, but Condemn'd in the best and purest Ages of the Church, as is plain from St. Ignatius, who liv'd in the Time of the Apostles, *Anno Christi* 71. and affirms, That "*It is not Lawful without the Bishop, to Baptize.* Epist. to the Smyrneans, N. 8. That "*Without Bishops, Priests and Deacons, there is no Church of the Elect;*— and that "*he is without, who does any thing without the Bishops, and Presbyters, and Deacons.* Epist. to the Trallians, N. 2, 3. 7. That, "*as many as are of Jesus Christ, are also with the Bishop.*— That, "*if any one follows him that makes a Schism, he shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* Epist. to the Philadelphians, N. 3.

These were the Notions of the Apostolic Fathers, which are now reviv'd and Defended, and which our Author Brands as exceeding the Uncharitableness of the Papists themselves, "*Who think their Communion is the One Church, out of which there is no Salvation*", p. 22. As if to assert the Truths taught by the Apostles and their Successors, were worse than to affirm the Novel false Doctrines of the corrupt Church of Rome: — As if to shew Men the truly Catholic and Apostolic Church, out of which there is no Reveal'd way of Salvation, and inform them how to be incorporated into it by Apostolic, *i. e.* Episcopal Baptism, which is the *Only Instituted Means of entrance thereinto*, were more Cruel and Uncharitable, than that false and uncharitable Notion of the Papists, which Damns all who are necessitated to seporate from them by reason of those *Sinful Terms* of Communion, which are impos'd in that Degenerated Church. — But this is only giving ill Names to Things, which are, notwithstanding such hard Usage as Sacred and True now, as ever they were. The Apostolic Fathers would not part with them, nor abate of their wholesome Rigour; and so neither should we, since they, who were certainly the best Judges,

Judges, held and taught them as necessary Fundamentals, without which, the Being and Unity of the Church could not subsist. And, as for the dismal Consequences of Unauthoriz'd Lay Baptism's being Null, *viz.* That Persons so falsely Baptiz'd, *are not Christians, are shut out of Christ's Covenant, and are no better than Heathens.* These are but accidental, and owing to Men's Sins and Impieties, affecting only those who are guiltily involv'd in them. But as for others, who believe the Articles of the Christian Faith, who cannot be accus'd of any Criminal Neglect, and who are unwillingly, unaffectedly, and yet invincibly ignorant of the necessity of, and therefore never receive Episcopal, which is the only Instituted Baptism; 'tis reasonable to believe, that their Case is no worse than that of the Primitive Catechumens, or Candidates for Baptism, who happen'd to die before they could be admitted to that Sacrament, and yet were not reckon'd as *shut out of Christ's Covenant, and no better than Heathens*; for tho' We are bound to every particular Institution of God, yet he is not, and therefore can give the inward Spiritual Graces where the outward Part of a Sacrament cannot be obtain'd; which leaves room enough for our Charitable Sentiments

ments of the Case of many Thousands, who never receiv'd the External Baptism of the Church of Christ, having only been wash'd by Lay Persons, without, or contrary to, the Authority of the Bishops.

§. 3. But our Author adds, That tho' this *“ Notion [of the Nullity of unauthoriz'd Lay [Baptism] “ once got into some “ Churches, who thought that the Baptism of “ Hereticks was of no value, and was to be “ repeated upon their coming into the Church, “ yet it was solemnly condemn'd and rejected “ by all Churches of God, now for above “ Fourteen hundred Years.* By this, the Reader, who is ignorant of Ecclesiastical History, would be induc'd to believe, that the Universal Church *solemnly condemn'd and rejected* this Notion of the Nullity of unauthoriz'd Lay Baptism: But there is no such thing, for the Universal Church in General Council, never made any Canon that *Condemn'd and Rejected* this Notion; and if the Adversary is pleas'd to insist upon it that they did, let him tell us, in which of the General Councils it was, that we may see and believe him. But he blends and jumbles together the Notion of the Nullity of Unauthoriz'd Lay Baptisms, with that of the invalidity of Heretical Baptisms, which are things vastly different

ferent from one another; the first having no pretence to any Commission at all given by the Bishops, and was never discuss'd in any General Council, because the Church was not pester'd with such unaccountable Lay-Usurpers, as we are now, till within these last 200 Years. And the other, *viz.* Heretical Baptisms, being such as were Administer'd by *Hereticks*, who had by one means or other been Episcopally Ordain'd to Minister in Holy Things: 'twas the Dispute about the Validity of these Baptisms that Exercis'd the Primitive Church about the middle of the third Century, when *St. Cyprian* Bishop of *Carthage* and his Colleagues, after the Example of their Predecessors, and in Conformity to the Ancient Customs of the *Asiatick* Churches, and the Determinations in the two Numerous Synods at *Synnada* and *Iconium*, held many Years before, and the Council of *Carthage* then, pronounc'd such Heretical Baptisms to be null and void, As being Destitute of any Valid Authority, being perform'd in Heresie and out of the Church. For they determin'd at *Iconium* in the Council under *Firmilian*; "That all those
 " should be held as Unbaptiz'd, who were Baptiz'd by such as had once been Bishops, in the
 " Catholick Church, if they were Baptiz'd by
 " them after they had separated from the
 " Church. This was oppos'd by Pope *Stephen*,

phen, who would have all Baptisms whatsoever, and by whomsoever Administer'd to be good and valid ; which was such an Extreme as the Churches afterwards, who declar'd for the validity of such Heretical and Schismatical Baptisms, as were Administer'd in the Name of the Trinity, could not acquiese in, for they Ordain'd in several Councils, that all Persons Baptiz'd by Hereticks should be Baptiz'd in the Name of the Trinity, if they had not been so Baptiz'd before ; contrary to the Resolution of *Stephen Bishop of Rome*, who would allow none of them to be Baptiz'd, but received all into the Church by virtue of their first tho' False Baptisms. This of Repeating those Heretical Baptisms which were Administer'd in the Name of the Trinity, 'tis acknowledged was solemnly condemn'd and reject-ed, but not by all the Churches of God now for above fourteen hundred Years, as our Author tells us, for the Greek Churches were for a long time after *St. Cyprians* Days divided upon this Question of the Nullity of those Baptisms. The Council of *Arles*, Anno 314. which consisted but of thirty three Western Bishops, first decided, and solemnly condemn'd the Notion of their Invalidity, and the Eastern Churches did not agree with the Western absolutely in this Point — But suppose

suppose that all, both Eastern and Western Churches in this last Period of 1400 Years had unanimously agreed, that the Baptism of such Hereticks in the Name of the Trinity is good and valid, contrary to the Canons of Numerous Councils in the more early and purer Ages of Christianity — What then? Must we therefore conclude them to be more in the Right than the Apostolick Fathers, and those many and more Primitive Churches who would not allow of this? And why do's not our Author care to appeal to the three first Centuries for the Decision of this Question? Is it because they were more strict Adherers to, and greater Sticklers for the unity and necessary Discipline of the Church, than afterwards? Or is it because the after Ages were more enlighten'd to discover divine Truths, than those Primitives were? But further, what if the after Determinations concerning Heretick Baptism were the best? This makes nothing for the validity of unauthoriz'd Lay-Baptism — Because 'tis notorious; that the Churches acknowledg'd those Heretick Baptizers to have been Commission'd by Episcopal Ordination, as is plain by their not Reordaining them when they came into the Church, which they certainly would have done, if they had never been in Holy Orders before;

before ; this makes those Heretical Baptisms which were Administer'd by Commission, and in the Name of the Trinity to be infinitely different from unauthoriz'd Lay-Baptisms, which are destitute of *any Commission whatsoever*, for tho' it should be said that those Heretical Baptisms are valid, because they are the External Body of the Sacrament, as wanting no one Essential Constituent part of that Body, which consists in the *Commission*, the *Water*, and the *Form* in the Name of the Trinity, yet this cannot be said for the Unauthoriz'd Lay-Baptism, because it is not the Body, since it wants the Commission, which is one of the constituent essential Parts, of the outward Body of the Sacrament of Baptism, as has been prov'd in the first Proposition of a Book Intitul'd Lay-Baptism Invalid ; First Edition, Page 13, and Second Edition, Page 42, to either of which the Reader is refer'd for his satisfaction herein — So that what may be said for those authoriz'd Heretical Baptisms, is no ways applicable to our unauthoriz'd Lay-Baptisms, as being no ways parallel to one another, and therefore the Churches declaring in favour of such Heretical Baptisms, is no Condemnation of the assertion of the Nullity of Lay-Baptisms without, or in opposition to the Episcopal Authority.

If

If it be said that the Council of *Elie-*
beris in *Spain*, *Anno* 305. allow'd of Lay-
 Baptism — 'Tis answer'd, 1st, That this
 was no General Council, and so did not
 oblige the Universal Church. 2^{dly}, That
 even this Council do's not Countenance *Un-*
authoriz'd Lay-Baptism, for the Canon is not
 Declarative of any Right that Laymen have
 in themselves, as private Christians to Bap-
 tize, no, It only authorizes some sort of
 Laymen to do it in certain Emergencies, and
 upon Conditions, that is, the Canon gives
 them a Power to Baptize, *which they had*
not before; for if they had, what need of a
 Canon in Council to give them leave? This
 Lay-Christian too was to be in Communion
 with the Bishop; He was to be such a one
 as was under no Penance, nor a *Bigamist* —
 He was allow'd by those Bishops to Baptize
 in a Case of Necessity those who were on a
 Journey, being at a great distance from a
 Church, and this too, *upon Condition* that he
 present the so Baptiz'd Person, if he survive,
 to the Bishop, to be Confirm'd by Imposition
 of his Hands. So that, if any thing can be
 said for the validity of those Lay-Baptisms,
 it must be founded upon those Bishops Au-
 thority to give such Power to their Lay-
 men, and then it must be pleaded that the
 Laymen acted by Authority, *first* received
 from

from their Bishops, if they had Power to give it them ; and consequently that they were Episcopally authoriz'd Laymen, which can no ways be said in behalf of our Lay-Usurpers, who never were authoriz'd by their Bishops to whom they owe subjection, and consequently can in no Sense be said to have the Divine Commission to Minister in such Holy Things ; And more especially when they act in direct Opposition to, and Rebellion against Episcopacy it self.

S. 4. Next he tells us, " *In Popery the*
 " *Midwives generally Baptize, yet tho' this is*
 " *against an Express Rule of the Apostles, that*
 " *a Woman ought not to speak in the Church,*
 " *None of the Reformed ever thought of Re-*
 " *baptizing the Persons so Baptiz'd, nor did*
 " *our Church at the Restoration ever enter-*
 " *tain the least motion of this Sort ; But*
 " *this is received by many.* But I must
 beg leave to tell him, that in Popery the
 Midwives do not generally, but on the
 contrary very seldom Baptize, only in
 danger of the Infants Death, when a
 Priest cannot be had time enough ; for
 there is a great Providence in this, that
 those People are very diligent to bring
 their Children to the publick Fonts, to
 receive Baptism of their Priests, notwith-
 standing

standing that unaccountable and unnatural liberty which their Church gives to Midwives, to Baptize in Cases of Extremity: As if they had a greater Reverence for, and Faith in the *Sacerdotal*, than the Midwife Baptism, and distrusted the Goodness and Validity of such Lay-Ministrations—But whatever it be, the Divine Providence do's in Fact secure the Validity of Baptism in the Church of *Rome*, by causing the Members thereof to be *Generally* Baptiz'd by their Priests, and not Midwives, as any Inquisitive Traveller into those Countries may be Certified if he please. But, tho' the contrary were true, yet even those Midwives Baptisms may justly be preferr'd before our unauthoriz'd Lay-Baptisms, because they are not done without, much less in opposition to the Authority of their Bishops, as ours are; So that, upon supposition, *which I dare not grant*, that those Midwife Baptisms could be defended as Valid upon the account of their Bishops having first granted them such Power—Our Anti-Episcopal Lay-Baptisms stand destitute of any such Plea—and therefore, can upon no account whatsoever be deemed Valid and Good, as being not only without, but directly opposite to the Authority

rity of our Bishops——Our Author acknowledges those Midwife Baptisms to be *against an Express Rule of the Apostles*, and yet notwithstanding pleads for them, by telling us that none of the Reformed, nor our Church at the Restoration, ever thought of, or entertained the least motion of, the Rebaptizing (as he calls it) the Persons so Baptiz'd. But what do's this Negative of *not Requiring* the Rebaptizations he speaks of amount to? Why nothing at all in the matter before us; for supposing, that this silence was owing to the Opinion that the Reformed, and our Church had, of the real Validity of those Midwife Baptisms, yet this will make nothing for the Validity of our Anti-Episcopal Lay-Baptisms; because, the Midwife Baptisms in the Church of *Rome* are not Anti-Episcopal, for whether Right or Wrong, they are in Communion with, in Subordination to, and by explicate permission and consent of, their Bishops, and therefore not the Subject matter of the Present Dispute —— Besides, Silence, and Tolleration in Things contrary to Law of God, are no Arguments for the Goodness of those Things, nor sufficient Reasons against their amendment — *Moses* for the Hardness of Mens Hearts,

suffer'd

suffer'd Men to put away their Wives for every Cause; but from the beginning it was not so. The Children of *Israel*, during their Forty Years sojourning in the Wilderness; did not Circumcise, tho' there was all that while a standing Law, that every Male should be Circumcis'd at Eight Days old. The Reformed, abundance of them, tho' they knew the Apostolick Institution of Episcopacy, and said they wish'd, that they could be so happy as to enjoy so great a Benefit, yet have constantly gone on without Episcopal Ordination, and never made one step towards the attaining of it. And the *Greek Church* in the *Turkish* Dominions, tho' they know that Christ gave sufficient Power and Authority to his Apostles and their Successors, to continue their own Succession to the End of the World; yet never attempt to claim their Spiritual Right, but continue subject in that respect to the Arbitrary Will of an Infidel *Mahometan*, who takes upon him to Nominate and Appoint who shall be Consecrated their Patriarch of *Constantinople*, &c. And Lastly, to name no more, The Church of *England* knows, that Christ has given her Power, and that she has accordingly made Laws, to thrust and repel from the Holy

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Commu-

Communion, all Schismaticks and other scandalous Sinners; and yet is silent and passive under all those horrid Prostitutions, which her Priests are forc'd to make of the Divine Mysteries, to the Sacrilegious Mouths of declar'd and known *Schismaticks*, *Occasional Conformists*, and other Profligate Sinners, to qualify them for Secular Offices of Honour and Profit. But all this is no Argument, against the Necessity of a Mans not Divorcing his Wife for every Cause; of Circumcision to the *Jews*; of Episcopal Ordination to the Reformed; of the Spiritual Power of the *Greek* Bishops, to Nominate and Consecrate their own Patriarchs and Bishops; and of the Church of *Englands* Power and Authority, to repel such notorious Sinners, as I have named, from the Sacrament of Christs Body and Blood; and so neither is the Silence of the Reformed, and of the Church of *England* in relation to the Re-baptization of Persons Baptiz'd by Midwives and Laymen, any Argument against their receiving Sacerdotal Baptism; so long as that is the only Baptism which Christ Instituted, and which by his Law every one is bound to receive, who has not yet received it. But not to leave this matter here. Our Church is not so supine and negligent about

about Lay Baptisms, as some may reckon her ; for, tho' (as " Dr. Geo. Abbot, in the
 " *Lecture which he read in the Divinity School*
 " *at Oxford, De Circumcisione & Baptis-*
 " *mo, 1597. says) Our Church after the Re-*
 " *formation, Facilitate Larga, with great*
 " *Latitude and Indulgence, for some time to-*
 " *lerated the Baptism of Lay Men and Women*
 " *in absolute Necessity, for the Ignorance of*
 " *the People, and Hardness of their Hearts ;*
 Yet it is most certain, that upon a Review
 of her Liturgy, she has erased and blotted
 out that Rubrick, which tolerated such Bap-
 tisms ; and not only so, but instead thereof,
 has appointed that even in Cases of Necessi-
 ty, Baptism shall be administred by the
 " *Minister of the Parish, or in his Absence,*
 " *any other Lawful Minister that can be pro-*
 " *cur'd ;* and we all know what she means
 by *Lawful Minister, i. e.* one Episcopally
 Ordain'd ; for she allows of no other Or-
 dination, but obliges all, howsoever and
 by whomsoever otherwise Ordain'd, to
 submit to be Ordain'd by a Bishop, before
 she can acknowledge them to have any
 Lawful Call, or power to Minister the
 Holy Sacraments. This shews her Non ap-
 proval and Rejection of Midwife, and other
 Lay Baptisms ; which is a plain Proof that
 she does not allow of their Validity ; and
 G 2 by

by this Act she calls Louder for what our Author terms Re-baptization, than her supposed Silence does for an acquiescence in such False, or rather No Baptisms: And therefore, 'tis necessary to administer Catholick Baptism to those who never receiv'd it, and who only have been wash'd by unauthoriz'd and Anti-Episcopal Lay Baptizers, which is worse than if they had been so by Lay Men, allow'd of by their Bishops; the Authority of which latter Baptism, if any at all, is now also taken away, and made void, in the Church of England.

§. 5. But to proceed; He says "The
 " common Topick to support this wild unheard
 " of Paradox, is, that the Commission to Preach
 " and Baptize, was given to the Apostles; so
 " that none but their Successors can pretend to
 " it. But has not every Christian in Cases
 " of Necessity, a right to Teach and Instruct a-
 " nother, and to perswade him to become a
 " Christian? And therefore tho' it is a very
 " just part of the Order of the Church, that
 " none but Persons initiated into Holy Func-
 " tions, should Baptize and Preach; yet Ne-
 " cessity is above all Rules, in such a Case
 " they may Baptize as well as Preach. Thus
 far our Author. 'Tis strange that he
 should call this a wild and unheard of Para-
 dox, when he doubtless knows, that the
 Apostolic

Apostolic Fathers allow'd nothing to be
Valid, that was done without the Bi-
 shop, much less when in Opposition to
 his Authority; as is plain, from what I
 have Cited out of St. Ignatius, p. 75. and
 by his saying to the Smyrneans, " Let no
 " Man do any thing of what belongs to the
 " Church, without the Bishop: Let that Eu-
 " charist be look'd upon as Firm and Just,
 " which is either offer'd by the Bishop, or by him
 " to whom the Bishop has given his Consent.
 " Wheresoever the Bishop shall appear, there
 " let the People also be; as where Jesus Christ
 " is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not
 " Lawful without the Bishop, either to Bap-
 " tize, or, &c. — But whatsoever he shall
 " approve, that is also pleasing unto God; that
 " so whatever is done, may be Secure and
 " well done. — He that Honours the Bi-
 " shop, shall be Honour'd of God; but he
 " that does any thing without his knowledge,
 " Ministers unto the Devil. Epist. to the
 Smyrneans, N. 8. 9. And again; As the
 " Lord did nothing without the Father, being
 " united to him, neither by himself, nor yet by
 " his Apostles; so neither do ye do any thing
 " without your Bishop and Presbyters: Nei-
 " ther endeavour to let any thing appear Rati-
 " onal to your selves apart, St. Ignatius Epist.
 to the Magnesians, N. 7. Thus, accord-

ing to that Glorious Saint and Martyr, nothing was *Firm*, nothing *Secure*, nothing *Rational*, but all as bad as Worshipping and Ministring to the Devil, when done without the Bishop's Authority; how much more would he have said so, had he liv'd in these our Days, and seen Men usurp to themselves a pretended Power of Ministring in Holy Things, directly in Opposition to all Episcopal Authority whatsoever. The least that can be said of these, is, that their Acts are Null and Void, if those were so, which the blessed Martyr would not allow to be Firm, Secure, or Rational, but acts of Worship paid to the Devil, when done only without the Bishop's Commission.--- This then is no *wild and unheard of Paradox*, but an ancient Apostolic Truth, and the result of Infinite Wisdom, who made Bishops his Vicegerents, and as such, the Supreme Ministers of his Sacred Mysteries, which by his appointment must be dispens'd to us, by, and in subordination to, them only; as is evident from our Lord's Commission to his Apostles, the first Supreme Governours of his Church; which runs thus "Go ye — Disciple all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things

*“ things whatsoever I have Commanded you ;
 “ and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the
 end of the World. Amen. St. Matt. xxviii.
 19, 20.*

Here is a great Commission given to particular Persons, to Officers empower'd to continue their own Succession : *As my
 “ Father hath sent me, even so send I you ;—*
 and here *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto
 “ the end of the World.* This is a demonstration, that their Office must continue and never fail, till the Consummation of all things ; and that they are the Conveyers of this Office to their Successors, and their Successors to others ; and so continually during the whole Period ; for, [*Lo, I am with You* ; Not with those, who can in no propriety of Speech, be said to be *You*, i. e. Apostles, either in whole, or in part ; for the Jews have a Saying, that every Man's Apostle is himself, because sent and empower'd by him ;—and our Saviour us'd to accommodate himself to the Jewish ways of speaking, and therefore told his Apostles, *Lo, I am with You* ; i. e. *You* and your Apostles, or Persons sent by *You* always, &c. So that if a Person pretends that Christ is with him in any act of Ministration, and produces the Words of this Commission for his Voucher, *Lo I am with You* ;

then, if in Fact he be not sent, --- if he be not of that Succession which Christ calls *You*, --- if he be not an Officer *sent* by an Apostle, he cannot possibly be said to have this Commission, and consequently cannot be said to perform any part of the Commission'd Ministrations: And therefore whatsoever Acts, either of Baptizing or Preaching, are done by him, are not the Commission'd Baptisms and Preachings, and consequently with respect to the Promise of Christ's concurrence with their Ministration, are as if they had not been, because he who Ministers is not one of the *You* whom Christ has promis'd to be with alway, even unto the end of the World.

§. 6. But further, what our Author drives at by asking, *Has not every Christian, in Cases of Necessity, a Right to Teach, &c.* and consequently to Baptize? Is not to be granted; for, whatever Right the Lay Man has to Teach, he did not come to that Right by Virtue of this Commission, because this Commission was never given him; and for his not having receiv'd it, he is distinguish'd from the Clergy by this Term of a *Lay-man*. Besides, what our Author calls a Case of Necessity, gives the Lay-man no *more Right or Authority to Teach or Preach,*
than

than he had before : He never had any *Authority* at all, but only a natural Duty incumbent on him, to communicate his useful Knowledge to the Ignorant, which gives him no Right of Superiority over his Neighbours as their Spiritual Teacher, for in respect of that, they are all his Equals, and owe him nothing but Thanks and Gratitude for his charitable Informing of them. He cannot, in Cases of Necessity, in the absence and destitution of God's Authoriz'd Preachers, set himself up as One of them, and affirm with any Truth, That he is an *Ambassador for Christ, a Steward of the Mysteries of God*, for he was never vested with any such Powers ; he cannot tell his Auditors (but with a Lye) *That if they despise him, they despise Christ.*—*That God has given to him* (this Lay-man) *the Ministry of Reconciliation,*—*That he took not this Honour to himself, but that he was call'd of God as was Aaron ;* and that this Gift was given him by the Laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery ; i. e. of the Apostolic Priesthood, or such authorized Hands as St. Paul's were.—He cannot, without being an egregious Cheat, tell the People, that “ *The Lord has Ordain'd that* “ *he should live of the Gospel, and that there-* “ *fore they should minister unto him in Carnal* “ *things*

“ things : For indeed, how should he thus Preach except he be sent ? And if he cannot Preach these for Truths respecting his Office, because he has no Spiritual Office at all ; then 'tis plain, that his Charitable Instructing of his ignorant Neighbours, is not by Virtue of the Commission which Christ gave his Apostles and their Successors ; and consequently so neither can his Baptizing be by Virtue of this Commission ; — and therefore his Baptism is no Instituted Baptism ; because not that Baptism which Christ has promis'd to concur with. For, if Men will persist in it, that he, i.e. Christ is with the Baptisms of those who are not Sent, where does it appear so ? When and to whom did he make such a Promise ? This is all in the Dark ; and, will Men love Darkness, rather than Light ? If they do, 'tis because their Deeds are Evil ; they run counter to a plain, easy, written Law of God, which has committed the Power of Baptizing to authoriz'd Ministers, and have recourse to no Divine Law at all for Lay Men to Baptize : — They value this Uninstituted Washing, and attribute to it the same Supernatural Power and Efficacy, as if it were that One Baptism which Christ himself appointed, Thus by a wretched Self-conceit, we forsake our

own

own Mercies; and to us in this case, may very justly be apply'd that of the Prophet
 " Be astonish'd O ye Heavens at this, and be
 " horribly afraid; Be ye very Desolate, saith
 " the Lord: For my People have committed
 " two Evils: They have forsaken me the Foun-
 " tain of Living Waters, and hewed them out
 " Cisterns, broken Cisterns that can hold no
 " Water! Jer. ii. 12, 13.

§. 7. But our Author will tell us, that *Necessity is above all Rules*. This is an Affirmative, and his Province to demonstrate. — But the contrary to this, is also an Affirmative, *viz. That Rules made by God himself concerning Ministrations merely Positive, are above all pretended Cases of Necessity whatsoever*; and this I shall endeavour to prove against him. I call 'em pretended Cases of Necessity, because it does not appear that there ever was any real Necessity for breaking in upon such Rules. But that they are above all suppos'd Necessities, is plain from the very Nature of their Institution, which is purely Positive, having nothing *intrinsically Moral* or of eternal Obligation, separate from the Divine Command or Injunction, which is the only Foundation upon which we are bound to observe them:
 Every

Every essential part of such meerly Positive Ministrations, is of the same Nature, *purely Positive*, and therefore of equal Obligation ; so that if one of those Essential Parts be wanting, nothing can be added instead thereof, to make up the Ministration ; because, whatsoever shall be attempted to be added to supply that Defect, will, because not instituted by God, be no Essential part of the Ministration, and therefore 'twill remain still as Unorganiz'd, as Defective, and Null, as 'twould have been without that pretended Supply : — For, the other Essential Parts were not instituted by themselves, seperate from that which is now wanting ; but they were all appointed together in union and conjunction with one another ; so that if one of them be absent, it makes the remainder to be Uninstituted ; and if you add Uninstituteds to Uninstituteds, the Sum will be still Uninstituted ; that is, the whole Ministration will be an Act of *Will Worship*, and if offer'd to God for the same Purposes as he appointed the Ministration for, which we pretend to supply, will amount to this Impiety and Presumption, that we exalt our *Own Inventions* to an Equality with His Institutions, and expect him to be as propitious and favourable to us for the sake of
ours,

ours, as he has promis'd to be for the sake of his own Appointments.

§. 8. To Explain this a little. The Instituted Ministration of the Priests Offering Incense to God with Coals of Fire taken from off the Altar before the Lord, under the *Mosaic* Dispensation, was meerly Positive; and seperate from God's Command, Incense had no more Intrinsic Spiritual Virtue, than the common Dust and Dung of the Earth; and we were no more oblig'd to offer him one than another by way of Atonement; but his Command made Incense necessary, and therefore 'twas Duty to Offer it. Again, who should offer it to God, was wholly indifferent, before he Determin'd it by his Commission; till then, 'twas no matter, whether a Priest, or a Levite, or a Common Jew did it: But when he fix'd it to the Priest's Office, then the Indifferency ceas'd, none could do it but the Priest: And because God would have it so, therefore all the whole Church of the Jews was bound to observe it. And this Obligation arose meerly from the Divine Command. The like is to be obsery'd as to the Fire wherewith the Priest was to offer the Incense. The same as to Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings, which were

were to be made by the Priest ; — and the Service of the Tabernacle, and the Care of the Ark of the Covenant, which appertain'd to the Levites by the appointment of God. — None of these things had any thing of Moral Obligation, or intrinsic Spiritual Virtue in themselves alone ; they were, in all their Parts, meerly Positive, and the Jews Duty to observe them was founded only on the Command of God ; — it did not belong to them to contrive what to do about such Ministrations, in case of the want and destitution of any one of their *Essential* Parts ; No ! for when they did so far concern themselves, the Divine Vengeance made them see, that he would not suffer them to go Unpunish'd, for tampering with, and endeavouring to mend his *Stated Rules*. — If there had been *No Incense* at hand, *Aaron* the High Priest, must not have ventur'd to take any thing else, which was not Commanded, instead thereof, to make an Atonement for the Sins of the People, by offering strange Perfume before the Lord : — And 'twas for mutilating and changing the Instituted Fire, and putting that which was not Commanded, in the room thereof, that there went out a Fire from the Lord, and devour'd *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the Sons of *Aaron*, who “ took either of them his Gen-

“ ser

*ser and put Fire therein, and put Incense
 thereon, and offer'd Strange Fire before the
 Lord, which he commanded them not, Lev.
 x. 1, 2. These were Priests, and they
 offer'd Incense; but they offer'd it with
 Strange Fire, that was not Commanded.
 This ruin'd the whole Ministration, and
 not only made it Null and Void, but Wick-
 ed and Impious, by the addition of what
 was not Commanded, instead of what was;
 for they ought to have taken "their Cen-
 sers full of burning Coals of Fire, from off
 the Altar before the Lord, and to have put
 the Incense upon that Fire, Lev. xvi. 12,
 13. But it seems they thought other Fire
 would do as well, and so made their whole
 Ministration of that Incense, Impious and
 Abominable, for which the Lord slew
 them. I don't bring this as any pretend-
 ed Case of Necessity; for doubtless those
 two Priests might have had Fire from off
 the Altar, and so had nothing in the least
 that might put on the Face of an Excuse for
 their Presumption; but I mention it here,
 that the Reader may see, by comparing
 this with the following Instances, which
 have a great shew of very Pressing Necessity,
 that God as much punish'd their Rash and
 unwarranted Zeal, who reckon'd "Neces-
 sity above all Rule, as he did those two
 Priests*

Priest's bold Presumption, for breaking in upon his Rule, *without any Plea of Necessity.*

§. 9. *Saul's Necessity* had all the appearance imaginable of being exceeding urgent: *Samuel* the Priest was absent; his Enemies press'd hard upon him; his People were scatter'd from him; he had not supplicated the Divine Favour: He reckon'd the most effectual way to obtain it was by Burnt-Offerings, and Peace-Offerings; and in this he was certainly in the Right, for their Institution made them so; but the same Institution requir'd, that they should be offer'd by the Priest, who was the Typical Representative of Christ, the Great High-Priest that was to come; without this they were not Instituted, but uncommanded, and therefore Null Burnt-Offerings, and Void Peace-Offerings, whether ordinarily, or in times of seeming Necessity; as appears by the issue of *Saul's Case*; for he ventur'd to endeavour to make God propitious and favourable to him, by offering an uncommanded Burnt-Offering, himself without the Priest; and for this False, this No Instituted Offering, which he would have to supply the want of

of the Instituted one, his plea of Necessity was not admitted; it was not allow'd to be *above all Rules*; for this unwarranted Zeal, or rather Presumption, he lost his Kingdom; God took it from him irrever-
sibly, and from his Children for ever.

After this Sin, we find him continually falling from one Wickedness to another;---the Spirit of God departs from him, and in stead thereof, an evil Spirit comes upon him: At last, to fill up the measure of his Iniquities, he applies himself to a Witch, who had a Devil for her Familiar, that he might know his Fate in a War he was engag'd in against the *Philistines*, who overcame him upon Mount Gilboa; where, through Madness and Despair, he became his own Executioner by Self-Murder.

§. 10. *Uzza's Case* also would, at first Sight, appear to be very Excusable, for the seeming great Necessity there was of *Saving the Ark*. It was carry'd on a new Cart drawn by Oxen; *Uzza* and *Abio* drove the Cart; the Oxen stumbled, and consequently the Ark shook and totter'd; *Uzza* fearing that it might fall, zealously put forth his Hand to hold it up; *And the Anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the Ark: And*

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there

there he Died before God, 2 Sam. vi. and 1 Chron. xiii. And why? But because 'twas none of his Office to touch the Ark, or any such Holy Thing, Num. iv. 15. This seeming Necessity was no Excuse; or his Zeal, which was either without, or contrary to Knowledge, any Plea for his breaking in upon the Instituted Rule: 'Twas his Duty to take notice and observe, that such Rules are above Necessity; and for his acting according to our Author's Maxim, that "*Necessity is above all Rules*"; he dy'd the Death as exemplarily as did *Nadab* and *Abihu*, for presuming to break in upon another Rule, without any such pretence of Necessity.

§. II. Thus we see, there is no meddling with God's Rule about his Instituted Ministrations, when they are meerly Positive. What we call Necessity, is no sufficient Plea; these Instances are standing Monuments, to give us Warning never to intrude Uncall'd, or without a Commission, into, or so much as touch, what he has appropriated to be done and perform'd by his own Commission'd Officers: Let our Necessities be never so great, they must submit to his Prescriptions, wait his Leisure till they can be supply'd; and if there

is

is no Humane appearance of any present or future Relief in this Life, sit down with Confidence in the Divine Goodness, who will accept of the Will for the Deed, when we are not culpable, for any Non-performance of what he has requir'd of us. For,

S. 12. Our Necessities can be but of three sorts.

- 1st.* Either we stand in need of Things Natural for our Bodies, or,
- 2^{dly}.* Of Things Moral for our Minds. Or,
- 3^{dly}.* Of such as are Supernatural, for the Salvation of our Souls.

Every one of these Necessities must be supply'd by its own proper and effectual Means, otherwise the attempt of supplying, will be useless and vain : Thus,

1st. The Necessities of our Bodies are supply'd by Food, Raiment, Houses, Physick, &c. which have a Natural Efficacy to answer our Bodily Wants; but if we are Lazy and Idle, if we sit still, and without making any use of these Natural Means, expect Relief barely from Moral Lectures and Instructions given us for the Information of our Minds; It will be no wonder if our Bodies perish, because these Means are no ways proper of themselves, nor effectual for their Support.

2dly. For our Minds, their Moral Necessities are to be supply'd by Moral Means, such as Information, Instruction, Teaching, and Example, which have a Moral Efficacy to cure our Ignorance, to set right our Judgments, and to inspire us with Noble Principles.—But if a Man should be so mad, as to attempt to gain these Moral Accomplishments, only by Eating, and Drinking, Dressing, Sleeping, taking Physick, &c. which of themselves, are utterly ineffective, and Means altogether inconsistent for the attaining of such Noble Ends: The whole Rational World would Hiss at him, and he would still remain as Immoral, Ignorant, Foolish, and Distracted, as he was before.

3dly. Our Necessities for Things Supernatural, can only be supply'd by Supernatural Means, appointed by God himself, who will answer our Wants upon our due use of those Means. All Men in their fallen State being Rebels against God, and therefore banish'd from his Kingdom, and lyable to Eternal Condemnation, do doubtless stand in need of these Supernatural Graces and Favours; Reconciliation to him; Adoption into his Family and Household; the Assistances of his sanctifying Spirit, to qualify them here, to live in a

blessed

bleſſed and happy Eternity of Joys unſpeakable, and full of Glory hereafter. Theſe, all the Powers of Nature can never give; the Means to obtain them, muſt be only of his preſcribing who has the power of them; and nothing inſtead of his Preſcriptions, can have any Efficacy to the attaining of them.

§. 13. Among the ſeveral Supernatural Means appointed by God for Reconciliation under the *Mosaic* Law, were thoſe of Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings, to be offer'd by the Priests. And we ſee by *Saul's* Example, that if there was an attempt of offering without a Priest, for the Purpoſes of the Inſtituted Sacerdotal Offering, 'twas not only an *Ineffective Means*, a meer Nullity for the Ends and Deſigns of the Inſtituted Offerings; but a Curſe to the Offerer himſelf; and would have been ſo by parity of Reason, to all others, who ſhould have knowingly concurr'd with him in *So Vain*, becauſe unappointed, and therefore Impious an Undertaking as his was, to make a Humane Invention equally a Means with a Divine Inſtitution.— He might as well have endeavour'd to have gain'd the Divine Favour and Reconciliation, by *Common Eating and Drinking*,

as by such a No Instituted Offering; for in themselves they are as Valid Means for so great an End as that was, being upon an equal Level therewith, equally adapted for the obtaining so great a Benefit; that is, nothing at all fit, because not appointed by God himself.

§. 14. To come now to the matter in hand: The Baptism instituted by Christ himself, is by Virtue of his appointment and concurrence therewith, a *Supernatural Means* of our initiation and incorporation into his Spiritual Household the Church; and of all the Supernatural Benefits annex'd thereto, and Consequent thereupon; for the obtaining of which, all natural Powers and Means whatsoever, are utterly Insufficient, as being none of them instituted by Christ for such Glorious Purposes. The Baptism which he appointed, is certainly to be known only by the Law which he has made concerning it; and this Law is in his Commission to his Apostles, where it is plain, that Christ's Baptism has three essential parts in its Ministration; the *Authoriz'd Baptizer* in the Apostolic Succession; the Matter, *Water*, and the *Form in the Name of the Trinity*. These Essentials are all meerly Positive, nothing

nothing Moral: They were all instituted by One Authority, and all together at the same time; not one or two of them sepe-
 rate from another; and they are all of equal Duration, and consequently of the same Necessity and Obligation; So that if one of them be wanting, the remainder cannot be the Instituted Baptism, because it was not appointed sepe-
 rate from that other part which is wanting. For example; a Priest baptizing only with Water, without the Form, does not administer Christ's Instituted Baptism, because Christ did not appoint Baptism without, but with the Form. Again; A Priest baptizing with Water, and another Form of Words, instead of the Instituted Form, does not administer Christ's Baptism, because Christ never instituted Baptism with such a Form. And lastly, Baptism, with Pronouncing the Form of Words in the Name of the Trinity, when done by a Person who is not one of those whom Christ promis'd to be with, *Baptizing*, is none of Christ's Instituted Baptism; for he never appointed any Baptism in the Name of the Trinity, to be done by one whom he did not promise to concur with; that is, he never instituted unauthoriz'd Lay Baptism. And therefore his Instituted

Baptism, which is the Supernatural Means of Supernatural Graces and Benefits, is only that which must be administred in the Name of the Trinity; by one bearing the Apostolic Commission: Hence, in the absence and want of such a Commission'd Baptizer, whatsoever Baptism is given by an unauthoriz'd Lay-man, is an ineffective Means; a Nullity, with respect to the Designs of Christian Baptism, and Void, and of no Effect (because not Instituted) for the Supernatural Ends we aim at.

Our Author's pleading for such Baptisms, only, by saying, that "*Necessity is above all Rules; in such Case they may Baptize,*" is a plain Indication, that those Baptisms are *without any Rule*; and consequently not Instituted Means of Supernatural Graces,—and therefore when perform'd for such purposes, are not only in themselves Null and Void, but also Impious and Profane, as they aspire to an Equality with the Instituted Baptisms,

§. 15. To conclude this about the Necessity of unauthoriz'd Lay Baptism;—The very Notion of its Necessity is indeed egregious Nonsense, so long as there is no proof of its being a Divine Institution; for In Cases merely Positive, and not in them-
selves

selves Moral, we have no other Necessity upon us, than what arises from that Obligation, which God's own appointment lays us under.

The Revelations made to *St. Hermas*, who was co-temporary with the Apostles, and who is mention'd by *St. Paul*, in *Rom. xvi. 14.* tho they insist upon the necessity of the Seal of *Christs Baptism*; "*That our Life is and shall be saved by Water.* *Shepherd of St. Hermas*, *Vif. iii. N. 3.* That "*Before a Man receives the Name of the Son of God, he is ordain'd unto Death; but when he receives the Seal, [i.e. Water] he is freed from Death, and deliver'd unto Life.* *Similitude xix. N. 16.* That the *Righteous Men and Prophets of the first and Second Ages*, *N. 15.* tho' "*they long ago carried their just Spirits, it was necessary for them to ascend by Water: — That, they being Dead, were nevertheless Sealed with the Seal of the Son of God.* *N. 16.* Yet notwithstanding all this Necessity, the Revelation discovers no Lay Baptizers: None are mention'd to have gone to these departed Righteous Men and Prophets, but "*The Apostles and Doctors of the Preaching of the Son of God.* "*N. 15. The Apostles and Teachers, who Preach'd the Name of the Son of God; none but these are mention'd to have given this*
Seal

Seal to those Just ones, who “ *Died in great Purity, being full of Righteousness, only this Seal was wanting.* N. 16.

§. 16. I don't mention this Passage for the sake of the Doctrine of Baptism given in a seperate State; but to shew, that notwithstanding the strict Sense which the *most Primitive* Fathers had of the Necessity of Baptism, They discover to us no other Baptism, than what must be administer'd by Authoriz'd *Apostles, Doctors and Teachers*; for, notwithstanding the Necessity which the ancient Prophets are here represented to have for Christian Baptism, yet none is found to give it them, but those who were Commission'd for that purpose; such great Strangers were the *most Primitive* Fathers of the Church (as well as the Holy Scriptures) to this new Maxim, that *Necessity is above all Rules*, that our St. *Hermas* gives us not the least Hint of any Unauthoriz'd Lay Christians giving Baptism to those Prophets to supply their Necessity which they might have done, if our Author's Maxim was then good and safe to be follow'd.

When *Frumentius*, a Lay-man, with others, in the Reign of the Emperor *Constantius*, had Converted some *Indians* to the know-

knowledge of Christ, by their Charitative Instructing of them in the Principles of Christianity, as *Socrates Scholasticus* tells us, in his Ecclesiastical History, Book I. cap. 19. — We don't find that he reckon'd himself Authoriz'd for the peculiar Ministrations of the Sacerdotal Office, till he went to St. *Athanasius* Bishop of *Alexandria*, and desir'd him that he would send a Bishop and Clergy to those People. — When St. *Athanasius* entreated *Fruventius* himself to take upon him the Bishoprick; — which was done; and *Fruventius* Dignify'd with an Episcopate, by St. *Athanasius*, returns again to the *Indian* Country, and there became a Preacher of the Christian Religion; — he wrought many Miracles, and cured many Men's Bodies, together with their Souls, says the Historian.

There would have been no need for all this Process, if *Fruventius* had but known the truth of our Author's Maxim, That *Necessity is above all Rules*; what occasion had he to venture so long a Journey to *Alexandria*, and put the Conversion of the Inner *India* and their Establishment in Christianity, to the risk of his single Life, by going to procure Commission'd Preachers, &c. if Gods Rules about these Mat-
ters

ters were not above all Necessity? He might have made himself Bishop, and appointed other Clergy, by Virtue of the pressing Necessity of those *Indians*; but the Rule would not allow it so, and therefore I concur with him, that, "*It is a very just part of the Order of the Church, that none but Persons initiated into holy Functions, should Baptize and Preach*; because this Order is exactly according to Sacred Scripture, and the Doctrine and Practice of the Apostolic Fathers; which have given us no Example of departing from this Rule in times of the greatest Necessity; but the direct contrary, that the Rule is above all Necessity whatsoever in Ministrations meerly Positive, and not Moral: And therefore our Church has now taken care to provide no pretended Salvos, but to confine Men to the *Stated Rule of Sacerdotal Baptism*, in times of the greatest Necessity; as is plain by her Office for Private Baptism.

§. 17. Our Author says, "*The Faith of the Trinity, gives every Man a Right to Baptize; and this has been the constant Sense of the Church for above Fourteen hundred Years, which in a Ritual Matter is certainly of great Authority. They reckon'd that,*
Baptism

Baptism is the Gift of Christ to his Church,
when given in the name of the Father, Son,
and Holy Ghost. This is only said, and
 not prov'd; not one Argument brought
 to confirm it. What he means by "*The*
Faith of the Trinity, &c. must be one of
 these two Things, Either that every one
 who believes in the Trinity, has a Right
 to Baptize; or else, That every Baptiz'd
 Christian has a Right to Baptize, provided
 he do it with the Form, in the Name of
 the Trinity. If the first, then, any unau-
 thoriz'd, unbaptiz'd Person, who believes
 the Doctrine of the Trinity, has a Right
 to Baptize others, before he is Baptiz'd
 himself. This is as good as if a Man
 should say, That every one who acknow-
 ledges the Queen's Authority, has (tho'
 Uncommission'd, and Unnaturaliz'd him-
 self) a Power to Naturalize Strangers, and
 vest them with all the Privileges that be-
 long to the Queen's Natural Subjects. But
 this Confutes itself. If he means, that e-
 very Baptiz'd Christian has a Right to
 Baptize, if he do it in the Name of the
 Trinity: Then this Right must belong to
 him, either because he is a Member of the
 Church, as such; or else, because he be-
 ing a Member of the Church, acquires this
 Right, by using the Form of Words in the
 Name

Name of the Trinity : The first of these gives him just as much Right to Baptize, as the Naturalization of a Stranger gives him to Naturalize other Strangers, which is none at all, as every body knows. And as for the Second, *that* can give him no more Right, than a Common Citizen has to make Men Free, when he uses the same Form of Words which the Chamberlain of *London* does when he gives a Freedom.— 'Tis the Chamberlain's Office to make Men Free ; and if a Common Citizen presumes to attempt it, his using the Chamberlain's Form of Words will be of no efficacy ; they give him no more Authority than he had before ; it will remain as Null a Freedom, as if he had not us'd those Words, so long as he cannot prove, that he ever receiv'd any Commission or Authority to give Freedoms.

§. 18. But further ; It is not Baptism in the Name of *the Trinity*, if it be not administered by one who has Commission and Authority from the Trinity : How can a Man be suppos'd to do any thing in another's Name, when he never was sent, or empower'd by that other ? How, for Example, can any one Sign and Seal Articles of Agreement between a King and his Rebellious

rebellious Subjects, without the King's Authority and Commission, and at the same time say, *I do this in the King's Name?* If any one should presume to do so, can *his* be call'd the King's Act? And has the King oblig'd himself by any such unauthoriz'd Act of one, who it may be, does this in Rebellion against that very Authority which the King has given to others for so great a purpose? As in the Case of our not only unauthoriz'd, but Anti-Episcopal Lay Baptizers: Certainly this can never be admitted, till direct Contradictions, can be reconcil'd. For 'tis no less than a direct Contradiction, to say I [an uncommission'd Lay-man] who never was Authoriz'd by the Trinity for this Purpose, Baptize thee *N.* in the Name of (*i. e.* by the Authority I have receiv'd from) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: And much more monstrous must the Aggravation be, when 'tis not only a Contradiction in Terms, but also a Defiance of the Trinity's Authority committed to the Bishops; for let such Baptizers think what they will, if they in truth are not in the Apostolic Succession, and have not Christ's first Commission handed to them from the Apostles, by their Successors; but instead thereof, a False Commission, receiv'd only

ly from such as never had Authority to give them a True One, but pretend to give it in opposition to the Authority of the Apostles Successors; Such Baptizers are so far from having the Commission of the Holy Trinity, which is no other than the first Commission given by Christ, that they are direct Rebels against that Commission, and can with no Reason or Equity be said to Baptize in the Name, or by the Authority, but against the Name, and contrary to the Authority of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And let our Author make the Experiment when he pleases, he will find no Precedents in the Primitive Church, for the Validity of unauthoriz'd, much less of our Anti-Episcopal Lay Baptisms; the Church for above *Fourteen hundred* Years, has not Canonically pronounc'd such Baptisms to be good; and those Churches which have said any thing in favour of Lay Baptism, have not determin'd it to be in the Power of Lay Christians as such, to Baptize, but have only authoriz'd some to do so in want of a Priest. [See what I have said upon the Council of *Eliberis*, p. 83.] which Authority, if it were Good, can extend no farther than to such Lay-men as were the Subjects of those Bishops, who gave such

Autho-

Authority ; and therefore not to all Laymen of the Universal Church, who were never impower'd by any of the four first General Councils, to Baptize.

§. 19. But because our Author is so very fond of these last *Fourteen Centuries* and does not care to be concluded by the *Three first hundred Years* of Christianity, which were the best and purest Ages of the Church: I will therefore bring some Testimonies against Lay Baptism, from competent Witnesses, who liv'd in that very Period which he himself insists on.

St. Basil thus Argues.

“ *Those whom a Laick Baptizeth, are to be Re-baptized ; but those whom a Heretick or Schismatick Baptizeth, a Laick Baptizeth ; therefore such are to be Re-baptized.* This Argument he made use of, to prove, that Heretical and Schismatical Baptisms, were Null and Void ; and he reckon'd them so, because he thought them of the same Nature as Lay Baptisms in those Days. His Major Proposition, that “ *Those whom a Laick Baptizeth, are to be Re-baptized,* was not Deny'd ; he had no Opposers to defend such Baptisms. All the Opposition he met with, was, that they deny'd his Minor, “ *That those whom a Heretick or Schismatick Baptizeth, a La-*
I “ *ick*

Baptizeth: They would not allow that the Hereticks and Schismatics in those Days, were meer Laicks; for in Fact, they had been admitted into the Ministry by Episcopal Ordination; and the *Nicene* Council had Condemn'd the Notion of such Hereticks and Schismatics being meer Lay-men: And therefore, tho' they did not deny, but Lay Baptism was Null and Void; yet they affirm'd Heretical and Schismatical Baptisms in the Name of the Trinity, to be Good, because they were not Lay Baptisms; and to this *St. Basil* consented. *Bas. Can. Epist. ad Amphilocho. Can. 1.* After the Council of *Nice*, the Major Proposition, " That those whom a Laick Baptizeth, are to be Re-baptized, was look'd upon to be so true, that it was the undoubted Principle whereby the Orthodox confuted the *Luciferians*; for thus they Argued, " Those whom a Laick Baptizeth, are to be Re-baptized; but those whom an *Arian* Priest Baptizeth, are not to be Re-baptized: " Therefore an *Arian* Priest is not a Laick. " This Argument so confounded *Hilary* the Deacon, that he was forced to deny the Major, which his Master *Lucifer* had granted before, viz. That those whom a Laick Baptizeth, are to be Re-baptized; and which *St. Jerom* affirms by the Authority of

of the *Nicene Council*. *Hieron. Dial adver. Lucif.*

St. *Chrysostome*, Arch-Bishop of *Constantinople*, Anno 398. "is *Express* for the Invalidity of Lay Baptism; and that in Cases of Necessity it can be no more administered by a Laick, than the Eucharist. *Chrys. Lib. iii. de Sacerd. C. 5.* "But all these are things (says he) which can be administered by no other Man living but by those Sacred Hands alone, the Hands I say of the Priest.

These are Instances for which I am beholden to the Learned and Reverend Mr. *William Reeves's* Notes on the 2d. Vol. of the *Apol. of Justin Martyr*, &c. p. 263, 264. —and are plain Proofs against our Author, who asserts, That "The Faith of the Trinity gives Every Man a Right to Baptize, and that this has been the Constant Sense of the Church for above Fourteen hundred Years. For here we see, that within the term of this very Period, 'twas a standing Maxim, that Lay Baptisms were Null and Void; and that those who pleaded for the Validity of some Heretical and Schismatical Baptisms, could not deny the Nullity of those which were administered by meer Laicks. So far is Antiquity from favouring our Author's Notions, that it is a direct Op-

poser of them; and that Age which he appeals to, Censures and Condemns his Assertions.

§. 20. He tells us, "*They reckon'd that Baptism is the Gift of Christ to his Church when given in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*" And who denies this? It certainly is so; but then they did not reckon it so in his Sense; they did not esteem it to be Baptism in the name of the Trinity, when perform'd by a Lay-man who was destitute of the Trinity's Authority, and Commission, to be convey'd by the Bishop; they did not reckon, that the Ministration of Baptism was the Gift of Christ to any but his Church Representative, the Bishops thereof, and those whom they should authorize; and then and then only, did they allow it to be Christ's Gift to the other part of his Church, when administred to them by the Hands of his Commissioners, whom he appointed to convey this Gift to every Member of his Spiritual Kingdom.

§. 21. He says, "*It is Christ's Baptism, be they who give it Hereticks, or Orthodox, Clergy, or Laity; and in the Latter Ages, Men or Women.*" but how does he prove

prove all this? He only tells us so; and is his bare affirming, sufficient to Convince? What if the Ancients after the three first Centuries did agree, that it is Christ's Baptism, when administred in the Name of the Trinity, by either a Heretick, or Orthodox Priest, because they reckon'd, that the Heresy of the Priest, *quasi Heresy*, did not Null and make Void Christ's Commission once given him? Does it therefore follow, that *that* is Christ's Baptism which is given by an unauthoriz'd Layman, who never was Christ's Representative, never had his Commission and Authority? Can any thing be call'd Christ's Ministration, which he neither performs in Person himself, nor is done by any one sent by him? At this rate, he may say, that a Laick's attempt to Consecrate the Eucharist, is Christ's Sacrament; — that a Laick's pretending to Bind and Loose, to Absolve and Retain Sins, is Christ's Binding and Loosing, Absolving and Retaining Sins; that a Lay-man's Excommunication of Notorious Offenders, is Christ's Excommunication of them; that a Lay-man's Authoritative Preaching as Christ's Ambassador, is Christ's Preaching; that a Laick's Government of the Church, is Christ's Government. — And Lastly, that

Lay Ordination, is Christ's Ordination; and so we shall have no need of either Bishops, Priests, or Deacons; no need of such Officers Spiritual Ministrations: But God be praised, our Great Law-giver has secured us again all this, by his own Sacred Institution of these Spiritual Officers, and their respective Functions; and has promis'd, that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against them.

§. 22. As for Womens Baptism, our Author has told us, that it is against "*an Express Rule of the Apostles*, p. 23. and here he says, it is *Christ's Baptism*. Are Christ and his Apostles at Variance with one another? Have they made Rules contrary to the Mind of Christ; or, has Christ own'd for his, what they expressly and by his Commission prohibited to be done? These things can never stand together, for the Apostles and Christ are exactly consistent with one another; their Rules are his Rules, and whatsoever is against their express Rule, is contrary to him, and therefore none of his: So that, if Women's Baptizing, is *against an Express Rule of the Apostles*, then Baptism administred by Women, is none of Christ's Baptism; because Christ's Baptism can never be *against an Express*

Express Rule of the Apostles, who made all their Rules, in conformity to his Institutions.

§. 23. Next, our Author would make his Reader believe, that the Doctrine of the Nullity of Lay Baptism, is *Popery*; for he says, "*This is not the only Step some are making towards Popery.*" To say, that it is not the Only Step, signifies, that it is One of the Steps some are making towards Popery; this is strange even to a Wonder and an Astonishment; every Body that can tell what Corrupt Popery is, knows, that the Notion of Lay Baptism's being Valid, is one of the particular Tenets of the Church of *Rome*. And how the denying of any Validity in such Baptisms, is making a Step towards (when 'tis directly contrary to) Popery, is inconceivable; but some People may find a way to make this Popery! by a new Maxim, which our Fore-fathers were ignorant of; and that is this; *Every thing that is Destructive of Heresy, Schism, Fanaticism, Libertinism, Deism, and Atheism, is Popery*: This is some of the *New Light* that is hung out to us in these Days of Darkness! by this we are enabled to Discover Secrets which before lay hid! and to free our selves from that

Dismal Slavery and Bondage, wherein the Priests held us, while we were destitute of this all-discovering Light ! by this, *Socinians* determine the Doctrine of the Trinity to be Popery ; *Schismatics*, that the necessity of constant Communion with the Church, is Popery ; *Fanatics*, That all Decency, and Order, and proper Ceremonies in Divine Worship, are Popery : *Libertines*, That all restraining of our Fleshly Lusts, all Obedience and Submission to Spiritual Superiors, are Popery ; *Deists*, That all Reveal'd Religion is an Invention of Popery : And *Atheists*, That the Being of a God and his Providence, are Popery. Every one of these calls what he Dislikes, Popery ; and by this means, works so far upon the Imaginations of simple People as to make them dislike and hate it too, because it is Popery ! For you must know, that Popery was once so dreadfully mischievous to us, that ever since, if the name of Popery be but given to the best of Things, 'tis an effectual way to make some (who know nothing of the matter) abhor and loath, what 'tis their Duty to Love, Reverence, and Esteem. I dare not suppose that our Author had any such Design, in telling us, that the opposing of Lay Baptism, "*is not the Only Step some are*
making"

"*making towards Popery.*—— I rather believe it to be some unhappy slip of his Pen ; but 'tis a very unlucky one ; and as such I leave it.

§. 24. 'Tis now high time for me to come to a Conclusion, and therefore I only beg leave to propose these following Questions to all the asserters of the Validity of unauthorized Lay Baptisms, humbly submitting their Resolution, as well as all that I have said in these Papers, to the wise Determination of the most Reverend, the Right Reverend, and Reverend the Orthodox Clergy of the Church of England, &c. who are the most competent Judges of such Matters, and they are these.

1st. Whether Christ's Institution of Baptism does not *as much* Determine, that it must constantly and unalterably be administered by those only, who are the Apostles Successors, and others appointed by them ; As it does fix the *Matter* to be no other than *Water*, and the *Form* to be no other than that in the Name of the Trinity ? and if it does, Then,

2^{dly}. Whether the Administrator of Christ's Baptism, is not appointed to be the Representative of God the giver, as
much

much as the Matter Water is, to be the outward Sign of the inward and Spiritual Graces, given and convey'd by Baptism? And if it is,

3dly. Whether there can be such a Thing as an Instituted outward Sign, of Inward and Spiritually Graces given, without the instituted Representative of God, the giver of those Graces?

4thly. Whether an unauthoriz'd Layman, can be justly said to be God's Representative; and how he can, even in times of greatest Necessity, give us the Sign and Seal as God's Attorney, without a Commission either immediately from God, or mediately from those whom God has authoriz'd to give such Commission.?

5thly. Whether Christ's Commission to his Apostles and their Successors, and those appointed by them to the end of the World, in these Words, "*Go ye, Disciple,* — *Baptizing,* is not a Positive Command to them, actually to Baptize such as were never Baptiz'd by them? If it is not, How are Clergymen oblig'd to Baptize at all? And what Divine Law is there, that has made it their incumbent Duty to give Baptism? But if the Commission is a Peremptory Command, and they are bound to Obey it, and consequently

to Baptize actually, all capable Subjects who were never Baptiz'd by them ; then,

6thly. How can they be fairly said to have obey'd this Command of Christ, when they refuse Baptism to those, who never receiv'd it from any of them, and earnestly sue to them for it?

7thly. Whether instead of this Act of Obedience, there is any Instituted Commutative Act, to be perform'd by the Clergy, over those who never were Baptiz'd by them ; and which is appointed to answer all the Ends and Designs of Sacerdotal Baptism, in some extraordinary Cases, when the giving or requiring of such Baptism, may cause Disturbances in the Church of Christ, from the Wickedness of some, and the Ignorance of others?

8thly. If there is any such Instituted Commutative Act, to supply the want of Sacerdotal Baptism, upon such Emergencies ; when, and by whom was it appointed?

9thly. But if there is no such Commutative Act appointed, then, why should Men rest satisfy'd with such Uninstituted Washings as are perform'd by unauthoriz'd Lay-men? And especially, what Reason can be given, why many among us should be esteem'd to have receiv'd Christ's Baptism,

tism, when in truth they have only been Wash'd by unauthoriz'd Lay-men, in Opposition to the Divine Authority of the Apostles Successors, the Bishops of the Christian Church.

10thly. And Lastly, If the Institution of Baptism does not necessarily require, that the Administrator thereof should be Authoriz'd and Commission'd by the Apostles Successors; then, by what Divine Law can it be prov'd, that Unbaptiz'd Persons of riper Years, are oblig'd to seek for Baptism at the Hands of any other Administrator? Why can't such Persons Baptize themselves, as well as receive Baptism from another, since they have as much Authority to come into the Church by their own Act of Baptizing themselves, as others have to admit them into it, by their unauthoriz'd Act of Baptization.

§. 25. These are Questions of very great Importance; for, if Baptism is not by Christ's Institution appropriated to the Priest's Office: If, as the Institution now stands, there can be such a thing as Christian Baptism, without an authoriz'd Administrator, then 'twill be extreamly Difficult, if at all Possible, to produce Arguments sufficient to prove, that any one
Spiritual

Spiritual Function, is peculiarly and unalienably annex'd to the Christian Priesthood ; for, whatsoever can be said against the necessity of an Explicite Commission to Baptize, may, to as good purpose be affirm'd against the Necessity of such a Commission, to Consecrate and administer the other Sacrament ; and the like against all other Parts of the Sacerdotal Power and Authority ; and so the whole Christian Priesthood itself will be liable to the same Objections ; and when these Objections shall gain Reputation, and prevail ; when not only the People, but the Clergy also, shall acknowledge and assert them ; Then it will inevitably come to pass, that the Sacerdotal Office must perish, and Christ will have no peculiar Order of Men to be his Commission'd Ambassadors, and to represent to us his Invisible Priesthood, by virtue of which he is now Mediating between God and Man, and pleading our Cause with his Eternal Father in the Highest Heavens. But this can never come to pass, so long as there shall be a Church of Christ on Earth ; For He, the great Founder of this Bless'd Society has promis'd, that the *Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*, and consequently, neither against his Instituted Spiritual Rulers and Governours thereof, with

with whom he has engag'd himself to continue, and always to concur with them in their Sacred Ministrations, even to the end of the World :

And therefore to Him, the great High-Priest of our Profession ! the Author and Finisher of our Faith ! the Eternal *Logos* ! who is God over all, Blessed for evermore ! with his Eternal Father ! and the Holy Ghost ! three Co-eternal Persons, and but one Infinite, Ineffable, and Incomprehensible God ! be all Honour, Praise, and Glory, Love, Obedience, and Adoration, ascrib'd and Paid by all his Creatures, henceforth, and for ever. *Amen.*



FINIS.

